



Open Letter To
Rick Steamboat: DON'T FORGET THE REASONS
THEY CALL LEROY BROWN "BAD"

November 1981
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Wrestle

Bruno & Mascaras:
WILL THEY DEFY
THE WWF'S ORDER TO
WRESTLE EACH OTHER?



COMEBACK!
THE RETURN OF
ANDRE THE GIANT
**HOW HARLEY RACE
TRIED TO SABOTAGE
DUSTY RHODES' TITLE REIGN**

Ken Patera's Claim:
**"TOMMY RICH IS
THROUGH!"**



OFFICIAL WRESTLING RATINGS

WORLD WRESTLING FEDERATION

- Champion: BOB BACKLUND
1—MAGNIFICENT MURACO
2—GREG VALENTINE
3—KING KONG MOSCA
4—SGT. SLAUGHTER
5—PEDRO MORALES
6—PAT PATTERSON
7—KILLER KHAN
8—RICK MARTEL
9—GEORGE STEELE
10—EL CANEK

AMERICAN WRESTLING ASSOCIATION

- Champion: NICK BOCKWINKEL
1—CRUSHER
2—BARON VON RASCHKE
3—DINO BRAVO
4—TITO SANTANA
5—SHEIK ADNAN AL-KAISSIE
6—CRUSHER BLACKWELL
7—GREG GAGNE
8—JIM BRUNZELL
9—JOHN STUDD
10—BRAD RHEINGANS

MOST POPULAR

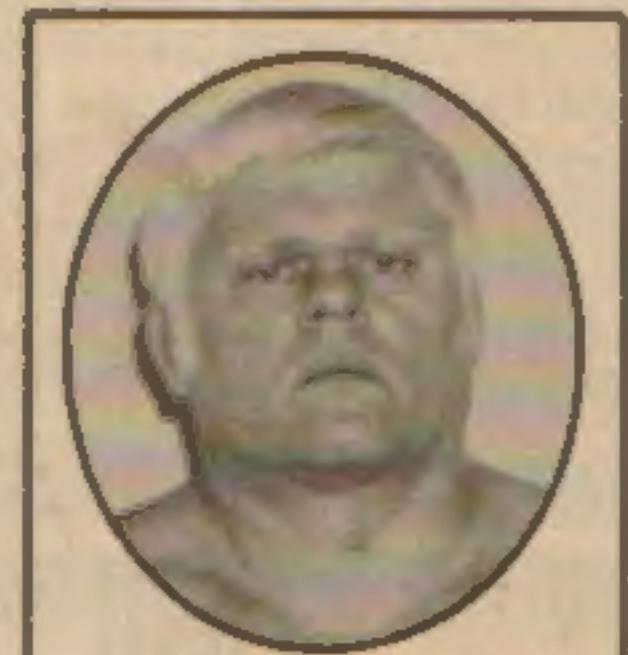
- 1—DUSTY RHODES
2—ANDRE THE GIANT
3—BRUNO SAMMARTINO
4—BOB BACKLUND
5—TOMMY RICH
6—RIC FLAIR
7—MIL MASCARAS
8—MR. WRESTLING II
9—RICK STEAMBOAT
10—DINO BRAVO



MAGNIFICENT MURACO



KERRY VON ERICH



CRUSHER



ANDRE THE GIANT

NATIONAL WRESTLING ALLIANCE

- Champion: DUSTY RHODES
1—RODDY PIPER
2—KEN PATERA
3—DORY FUNK JR.
4—JIMMY SNUKA
5—Ivan Koloff
6—HARLEY RACE
7—TOMMY RICH
8—PAUL ORNDORFF
9—RIC FLAIR
10—KERRY VON ERICH

TAG TEAMS

- 1—THE ANDERSON BROTHERS
2—TONY GAREA & RICK MARTEL
3—GREG GAGNE & JIM BRUNZELL
4—THE ASSASSINS
5—JIMMY SNUKA & TERRY GORDY
6—Ivan Koloff & CHRIS MARKOFF
7—DICK MURDOCH & JUNKYARD DOG
8—JACK & JERRY BRISCO
9—MR. FUJI & MASSA SAITO
10—TULLY BLANCHARD & GINO HERNANDEZ

MOST HATED

- 1—MAGNIFICENT MURACO
2—RODDY PIPER
3—JIMMY SNUKA
4—HARLEY RACE
5—GREG VALENTINE
6—BRUISER BRODIE
7—KILLER KHAN
8—CRUSHER BLACKWELL
9—EDDY MANSFIELD
10—PAUL ORNDORFF

WHAT'S HAPPENING!

By BILL APTER

THE MOONDOGS LOST the World Wrestling Federation tag team championship to Tony Garea and Rick Martel, the men they defeated for the belts four months earlier. And Captain Lou Albano did not take it well.

"I dunno what happened to them," an enraged Albano exclaimed as he spoke of his Moondogs' loss. "They would not listen to me. I had to go into the ring during the match and whip them with straps. They still wouldn't follow my instructions! The Captain is disappointed. The Captain is mad, daddy. I beat them savagely in the dressing room. They're bad doggies—bad."

Albano has shifted his concentration to his new duo of Mr. Fuji and Massa Saito, who he predicts will quickly dethrone Martel and Garea.

Freebird Michael Hayes has returned to Georgia, and he is at war with one of his former partners, Terry Gordy. An inciteful "Q & A" on page 20 provides further detail... In one of the most vicious battles in New Orleans history, rulebreaker Paul Orndorff won the North American title from Jake Roberts... The Outlaws, Joel and David Deaton, a

new tag team in Florida managed by Jim Kent, have vowed destruction of the Brisco brothers... Ron Bass is headed to the Mid-Atlantic region.

Rick McGraw has sustained a very serious neck injury at the hands of Killer Khan. "My Killer is a genius!" said Khan's manager, Fred Blassie. "First he broke Andre the Freak's leg, and now he's put pretty boy McGraw out of commission. Backlund, you're next!"... Verne Gagne had a guest

appearance on NBC's *Phil Donohue Show*. Verne discussed his career and how he keeps himself in tip top condition now that he has retired.

The Masked Superstar has had enough of the scientific side of wrestling and has become a rule-breaker once again in Georgia. No doubt he will rekindle his old feud with Mr. Wrestling II. II sadly says, "I knew this would happen. I said it in this magazine before. It's

(Continued on page 50)



Blackjack Mulligan, bleeding from cuts on the forehead, looks for an escape from Masked Superstar's headlock. Superstar is unfortunately wrestling as a rulebreaker once again.

CORRESPONDENTS Reports

ASHEVILLE, NC—*Correspondent:* Sarah Danner—Ric Flair and Jay Youngblood flew into such a rage against Gene and Ole Anderson that they seized the microphone before the match and demanded there be no referee or time limit. The Andersons were very hesitant to come out and had to be forced by the promoters to get into the ring. Flair was so outraged he attacked the Andersons before the bell with a metal baseball bat and nearly cracked Ole Anderson's skull. Ole tried to use brass knuckles on Ric, but the bat stopped him short. Though Ric and Jay were both hurt, they chased the Andersons

If you would like your area of the country represented in these reports, while also being officially credited with your own by-line, send us reports of the matches you attend. You will have the thrill of seeing your name in an internationally known magazine while at the same time helping to improve the quality of wrestling in your area. So why not give it a try? You will be glad you did!

Send your reports to: Correspondent Editor, Box 48, Rockville Centre, N.Y. 11571.

clear out of the arena, and did a war dance to celebrate their victory.

In other bouts, Rick Steamboat stomped Ivan Koloff... Hussein Arab cheated past Mr. Wrestling II.



Gene and Ole Anderson were fortunate to be able to retain their NWA tag team title after taking a severe beating from Ric Flair and Jay Youngblood.



Ken Patera was disqualified against Dusty Rhodes when he was counted out of the ring while trying to execute a swinging neckbreaker from the ring apron.

ATLANTA, GA—Correspondent: Steve Hendrix—Dusty Rhodes defended his NWA championship against Georgia champion Ken Patera in the Omni. Patera attacked Dusty before the bell and threw the champion out of the ring. Ken slammed Dusty into the ringpost and then hit Rhodes with the precious gold NWA belt, opening a huge gash on Rhodes' head. Dusty finally got untrapped and clamped the figure-four on Patera. The two rolled to the ropes and broke the hold. After a nip-and-tuck battle, both men tumbled from the ring. Dusty climbed back in, but Patera came up behind Rhodes and clamped on the swinging neckbreaker hold. The referee disqualified Patera because he was outside the ring while Dusty was inside. Rhodes retained his NWA belt.

In other bouts, Blackjack Mulligan downed Bruiser Brody, Steve O stomped Big Jim Duggan, and Bruce Reed and George Wells whipped Professor Sonoda and Bryan St. John.

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YOU ASKED US

Here's the monthly feature which YOU get to write! It's your chance to have a top wrestler answer YOUR question! Only the best questions will be answered—so put on your thinking caps and come up with some good ones! Address your questions—and who you would like to have answer them—to: **YOU ASKED US, c/o THE WRESTLER, PO BOX 48, Rockville Centre, N.Y. 11571.** Questions will be answered only in this column and at our discretion!



An enraged Ken Patera has to be restrained by referees and wrestlers following a title match with Bob Backlund at Madison Square Garden. Patera charges Backlund and his manager, Arnold Skoaland, with bribing officials.

Q: "Could you ask Ken Patera when he's coming back to the WWF and also what kind of music he likes?"—Juanita Ford, Segabo Lake, ME

A: "As everyone knows," responded Patera, "I can't get back into the WWF because Backlund and Skoaland have paid off the officials to keep me out. As for the kind of music I like, it's the sweet

sound of my opponents' necks breaking when I put them in my swinging full-nelson."

Q: "I would like to ask Mil Mascaras how he would feel about wrestling another high-flying superstar, Jimmy Snuka"—Shawn Wiseman, Zanesville, OH



Mil Mascaras looks forward to a match with high-flying Jimmy Snuka. Snuka, a former fan favorite, turned to rule-breaking over two years ago.

A: "Well, I would like it very much," said Mascaras. "I understand this Snuka is a very bad man. It would be good to prove that my scientific aerial maneuvers are better than his."

Q: "I heard that Dusty Rhodes was once managed by Playboy Gary Hart. Does that make Rhodes a former rule-breaker?"—Steve Gunter, Montgomery, AL

A: Early in his career, Rhodes was one of the most feared rulebreakers in wrestling. As a member of the infamous Outlaws with Dick Murdoch, Rhodes was known for crippling opponents and winning tag team belts throughout the South. Of course, Rhodes reformed his ways a few years ago, and has since become one of the sport's most popular wrestlers.

(Continued on page 53)

Every issue, this magazine praises the noteworthy and damns those who violate the spirit of wrestling's dignity. The praiseworthy are given a "thumbs up," the disgraceful are marked with "thumbs down." Here is this month's roll of honor and shame

Thumbs Up



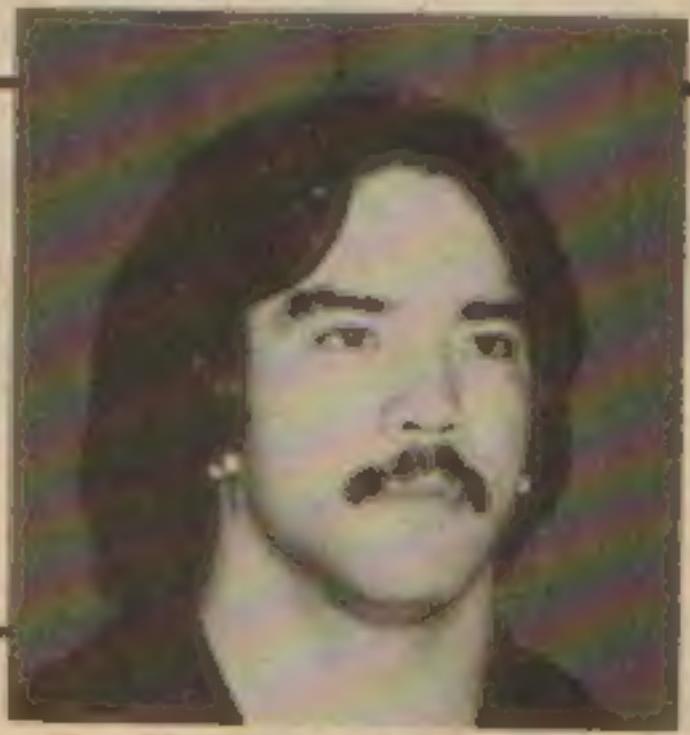
THUMBS UP to Dusty Rhodes: His willingness to give top area challengers, regardless of their ring tactics, the opportunity to wrestle for his NWA title indicates that he will be a fair, nondiscriminating, and active champion. Dusty Rhodes is a good man and should do a great deal for the sport as long as he can remain on top.



THUMBS DOWN to Harley Race: He couldn't take losing the NWA title like a man. Moments after his defeat, he was on the phone with promoters who hadn't yet heard about the title change, arranging a grueling schedule of title defenses for the new champion. Such devious undertakings could have damaged not only Dusty Rhodes, but the entire sport of wrestling.



THUMBS UP to Andre the Giant: With the fortunes this great man has accumulated over his years in wrestling, it would have been very easy for him to call it quits after Killer Khan broke his leg months back. More for the sake of the sport than any personal need for vengeance, Andre has launched a comeback. The Giant is a big man in many ways.



THUMBS DOWN to Rick Steamboat: By opening his heart to the friendship of Leroy Brown, Steamboat might well be opening his guard to an attack that could ruin his career. While Rick should be commended for allowing a fellow human being an opportunity to change the course of his life, it is foolish of him to do so without extreme caution. Brown's past deeds should be forgiven but not ignored.



THUMBS UP to Michael Hayes: Not long ago he was among the most hated men in the sport. But he never thought twice about it until he saw what he was doing was affecting his little brother's life. Hayes has reconstructed his wrestling career and must be praised for showing such concern for his brother.

(Continued on page 54)

Thumbs Down



Q&A

Each month,
THE WRESTLER
will present a "Question
and Answer" forum with an
important figure in the wrestling world.
It is your chance to meet wrestling's
biggest stars as they answer the
questions uppermost on the fans' minds



Michael Hayes tells Gordon Solie and a nationwide television audience why he has changed his ways.

Q: Michael, you have shocked the wrestling world.

A: I can't believe the response to what's happened. Yesterday, I got over 2,000 pieces of mail. All but 10 congratulated me for what I've done.

Q: What happened to cause you to change so quickly?

A: Well, it may have looked like it was a quick change, but to me it felt agonizingly slow. You know, when I was here in Georgia the first time, wrestling with The Freebirds, it was like constantly being in battle. I had no time to think or reflect. Everyday brought another war, another match. Those other guys [Hayes' Freebird partners, Buddy Roberts and Terry Gordy] were too stupid to know what to do without me. I had to be the brains for those two clowns. I had no time for me.

Q: So, once you left Georgia, you had more time to think.

A: That's right. I went home to Pensacola, Florida. Went back to live with my folks for a while, just sort of hang out on the back porch, do nothing but lie under a big tree and think. It was kind of hard to admit it, but I didn't like what I saw. I was

MICHAEL HAYES



MICHAEL HAYES' CONVERSION to scientific wrestling has stunned the state of Georgia. At one time, as a member of The Freebirds, the cocky Hayes was the most hated man in the state. But after a short absence from Georgia, Hayes returned a changed man. What brought about this shocking metamorphosis? Is it a conversion based on principles or was it merely the opportunistic thing to do? We interviewed Hayes in his dressing room before a recent match in Columbus, Georgia.



One of the most fearsome combinations ever to hold the Georgia tag team championship, The Freebirds' reign of terror was short. Personality conflicts started to erode their partnership from the start.

a loud-mouthed bully.

Q: And that sudden self-realization caused you to change?

A: No, not quite. You see, I'm kind of pigheaded. It takes a while for things to seep in. Let me tell you what really did it. I'm at my folks home in Florida, you know, just working around the yard, when my little brother Roy

comes home. He's got a black eye and I can see he's been crying. I ask him what happened, but he just runs up to his room. Well, I found out what happened. Roy was going around town saying he's the fourth Freebird. He's strutting around Main Street, picking fights with everyone he sees. And if you think I got a vile

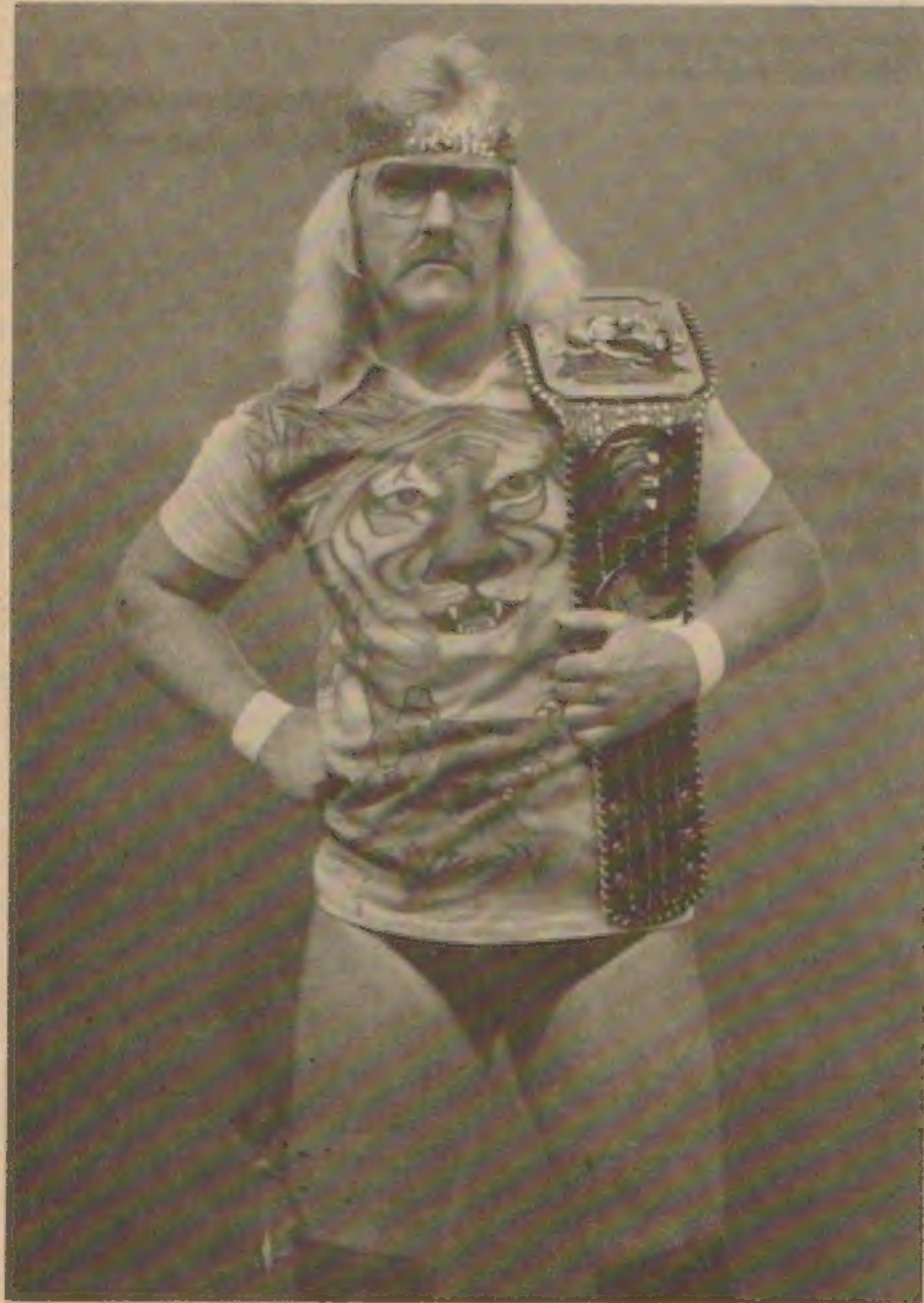
mouth on me, well, you should hear Roy.

Q: Your brother was just following in your footsteps, using you as a role model.

A: Exactly. And man, did it hurt to see it. I may not care what happens to me, but I'll be damned if my kid brother grows up bad. Right then and there I knew

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INTRODUCING RANDY ROSE



THE BLACK TRANS-AM howled along the beachfront road in Pensacola, Florida, trailing a cloud of dust as it hugged the broad curves of the coastline. Screeching to a stop in front of the marina, a young muscular man stepped out and introduced

himself as Randy Rose.

He motioned to a speedboat moored at the marina dock. "How about going for a little spin?"

Back on shore, 20 high-speed minutes later, Randy talked about himself and his wrestling career.

"I love it down here in Florida,"

he said. "The weather is the best anywhere, the women are fantastic, and I can just take off in my speedboat any time I want."

"Of course I do have to devote a lot of my time to training, and also to matches. As far as training, I do a lot of weightlifting, isometrics, general exercises, that sort of thing."

As for wrestling? Though his name may be new to some readers, Randy Rose is quickly establishing himself as one of the foremost wrestlers in the world.

"I've wrestled in Australia, New Zealand, Hawaii, Japan, Korea, Tasmania, and Guam," Randy explained. "I held the Central States title in Kansas City and St. Louis, and was part of a championship tag team in Australia. I've wrestled in Tampa, Atlanta, Louisiana, and am now concentrating my energy in the Southeast."

Presumably Randy is staying in the South because his home is there. But there are other reasons as well.

"Like I said, the weather of course is the best. I've got my black Corvette in addition to the Trans-Am, not to mention the speedboat. The women love to go water skiing down here, and I'm only too happy to be able to oblige."

A young wrestler whose style is still in the developmental stages, Randy, finds that he's able to handle strong opposition in the ring.

"I'm pretty confident about myself," Rose explained. "I don't find that anybody really intimidates me at all, and I've been up against some of the toughest

From the sunny shores of Florida, land of awesome speedboats, fast cars, and beautiful women comes a young man with promise of reaching the top. Randy Rose knows what he wants out of life, and part of what he wants is to be the best in wrestling. He's well on his way



As partner Dennis Condrey holds a helpless foe over his knees, Rose launches a vicious assault from the top turnbuckle (above left). Rose applies a vice-like chinlock on Bob Armstrong (above right). Even during the heat of battle, Rose scans the crowd for beautiful women (below).



names here in the Southeast."

Does the fact that his last name is Rose take away from his impact in the ring?

"Well, sometimes I get ragged on by the other wrestlers about my name," he admits. "You know, they call me Rosie, they call me a

flower lady, stuff like that. It doesn't bother me.

"What I like to do sometimes is carry a rose into the ring and find the best looking young lady in the audience and give it to her. Man, you should see them when I do that! You'd think Tom Jones just threw his hotel key into their lap or something! And of course I always carry a silk rose in my knee pad. It's my symbol."

What does the immediate future hold for Randy Rose?

"Titles," he proclaimed. "A lot of them. I'm hoping to go all the way in this sport, and I'm confident that I'll be able to do it.

"I've got a lot of good opponents coming up in the near future. People like Paul Orndorff, Bob Armstrong, Ron Fuller, Jerry Stubbs, Jimmy Golden, Ron Bass, Mr. Saito, and Norwell Austin. They're not strong enough that I won't be able to take them, but I'm hoping they'll at least make me break a sweat. I don't want *everything* to come too easily in this sport . . . just most things!"

One thing that does come very easily to this strong young man with the long blond hair is self-confidence. Coupled with his poise and grace in the ring, Randy Rose shows all the earmarks of a champion.

As Rose climbed back into his Trans-Am, he winked knowingly. "Someday, maybe even the NWA title, huh?"

Smiling, he engaged the clutch and sped off down the road leaving a cloud of dust and the aromatic tinge of burning rubber in his wake. Yes, someday maybe even the title. □

HOW HARLEY RACE TRIED TO SABOTAGE DUSTY RHODES' TITLE REIGN

PHOTOS BY KOICHI YOSHIZAWA



Harley Race (above) very nearly succeeded in destroying Dusty Rhodes in the first weeks of his NWA title reign. Dusty battles Stan Hansen in Japan (right).

Typical of the manner in which he held the NWA title, Harley Race didn't waste any time in establishing himself as a devious non-champion. Moments after losing the title to Dusty Rhodes, Race took advantage of unknowing promoters and arranged an incredibly grueling schedule for the new champion.



A DIABOLICAL PLAN developed by Harley Race with the help of unsuspecting wrestling promoters worldwide nearly caused the successful destruction of Dusty Rhodes' brand new title reign.

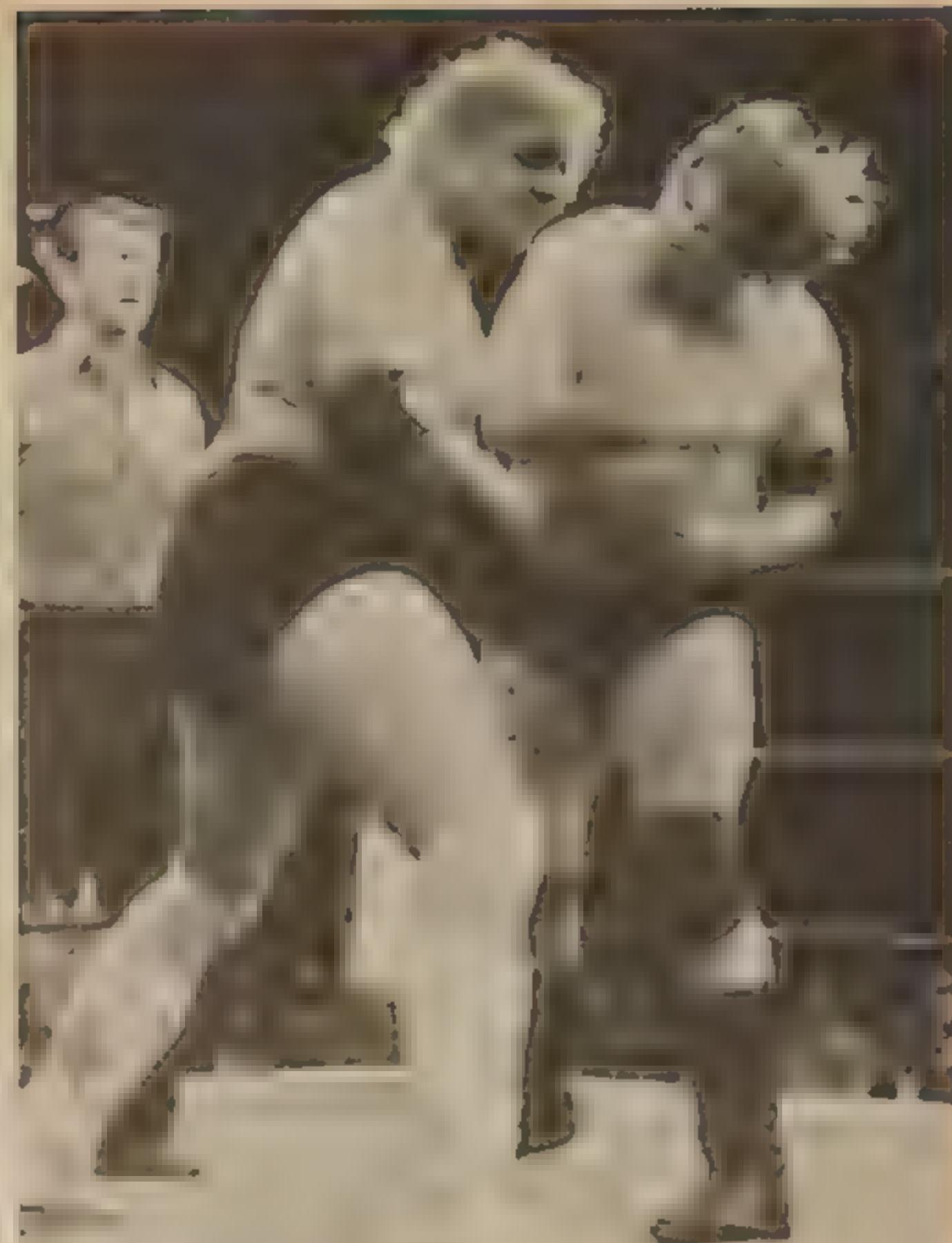
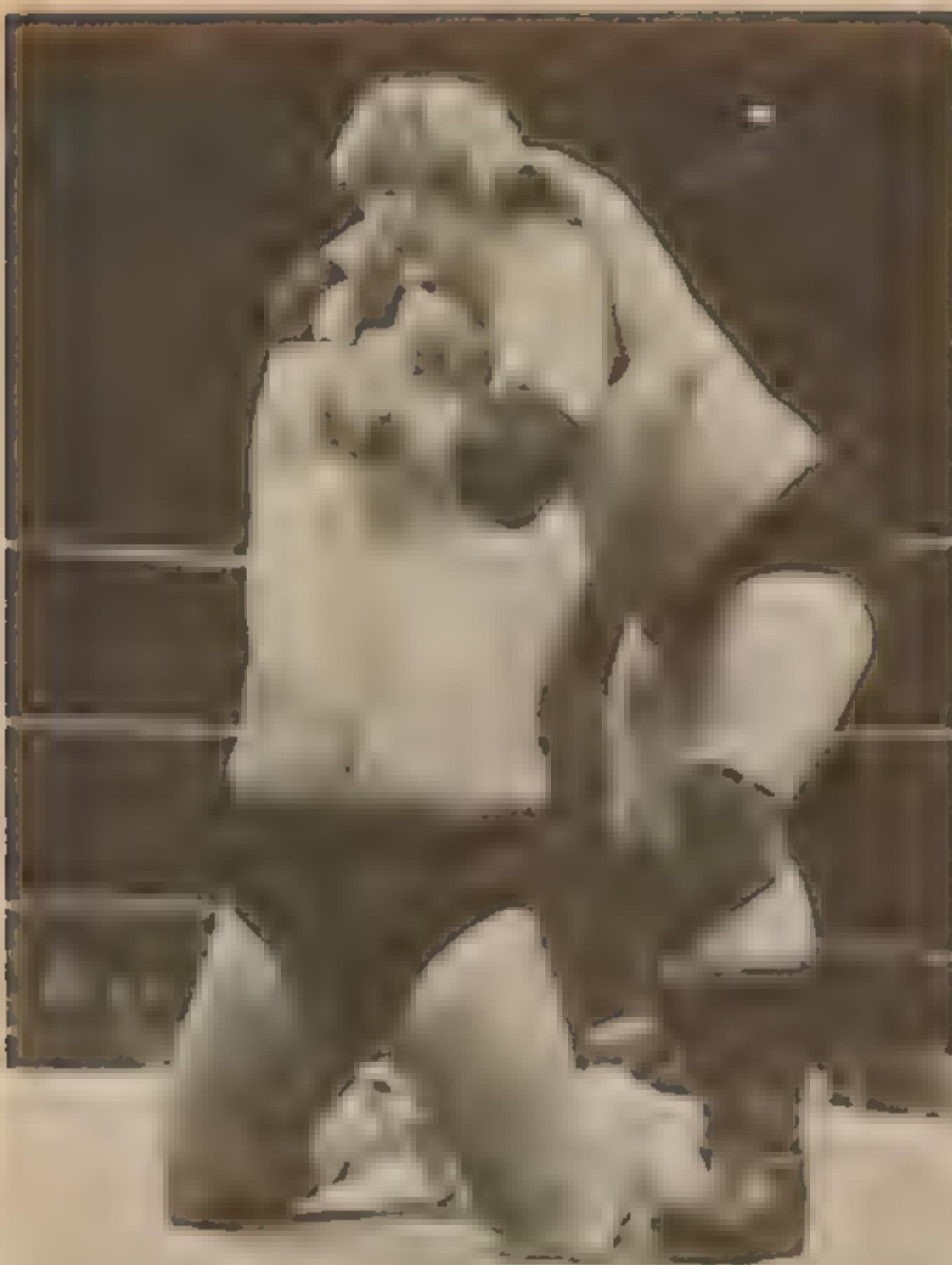
According to NWA protocol, any incoming champion must

fulfill contractual obligations of the outgoing champ. In other words, if Harley Race had signed for a half dozen title defenses, Dusty Rhodes would have to take Harley's place in those matches.

Usually this rule doesn't cause a wrestler any problems. This

time, however, calculated vengeance by Race almost caused Rhodes irreparable damage to both his health and his career.

Moments after dropping his crown, Race made dozens of phone calls to unknowing promoters for an incredibly



One day in Japan, the next in Australia, over to Germany, and back to the United States, the schedule Race arranged for Rhodes would have destroyed the average man. Dusty Rhodes is not the average man. His battle with Stan Hansen was brutal, but just one in the series.

strenuous series of "title" defenses.

According to leaks from within the Race organization and sources close to promoters in the States, as well as in Japan, Australia, and Germany, Race signed for a series of matches which would have been inhumanly torturous, if not totally impossible to fulfill.

"What Race had obviously done," reported a spokesman close to Dusty Rhodes, "was to put together the most grueling schedule possible by taking advantage of the fact that the promoters had no knowledge of the title change."

The schedule Race put together combined Inter-
(Continued on page 62)

Staff Reporters Shocking Revelation



"I'M AFRAID MY UNCLE MAY BE AN AWFUL TERRORIST!"

By Steve Farhood

AS AN ASSOCIATE editor of this magazine, I often get the opportunity to travel all across the country. Not too long ago, I found myself in Omaha, Nebraska, with a case of *deja-vu* like I've never had before.

The occasion was a match between Curt Hennig and newcomer Sheik Adnan Al-Kaissie. With a name like Farhood, you know I'm not Irish, so my interest in Al-Kaissie was personal as well as professional. I'll cheer for any fellow Middle Easterner if I get the chance (except maybe the Ayatollah Khomeini).

The Hennig/Al-Kaissie match was scheduled a little later in the card, so I had some time during the first couple of matches to scan the press release about Al-Kaissie.

Seems that this guy is from Bagdad, Iran. That's interesting, I

thought. I remember my mom telling me stories about relatives in Bagdad when I was growing up in Brooklyn. Oh well, what else do they say about this guy?

According to the press release, he's the current Mideast champion. According to the word on the grapevine, he's also the richest man in wrestling. I guess he wrestles for the glory of it all...he sure doesn't need the money.

The words of the ring announcer brought my attention away from the press release and back onto the events in the Omaha arena. Hennig had already been introduced, and now I was going to get my first glance at Al-Kaissie.

"In the other corner..." cried the announcer, as Hennig's opponent for the evening entered the ring. I was dumbfounded, I was mesmerized. I knew that



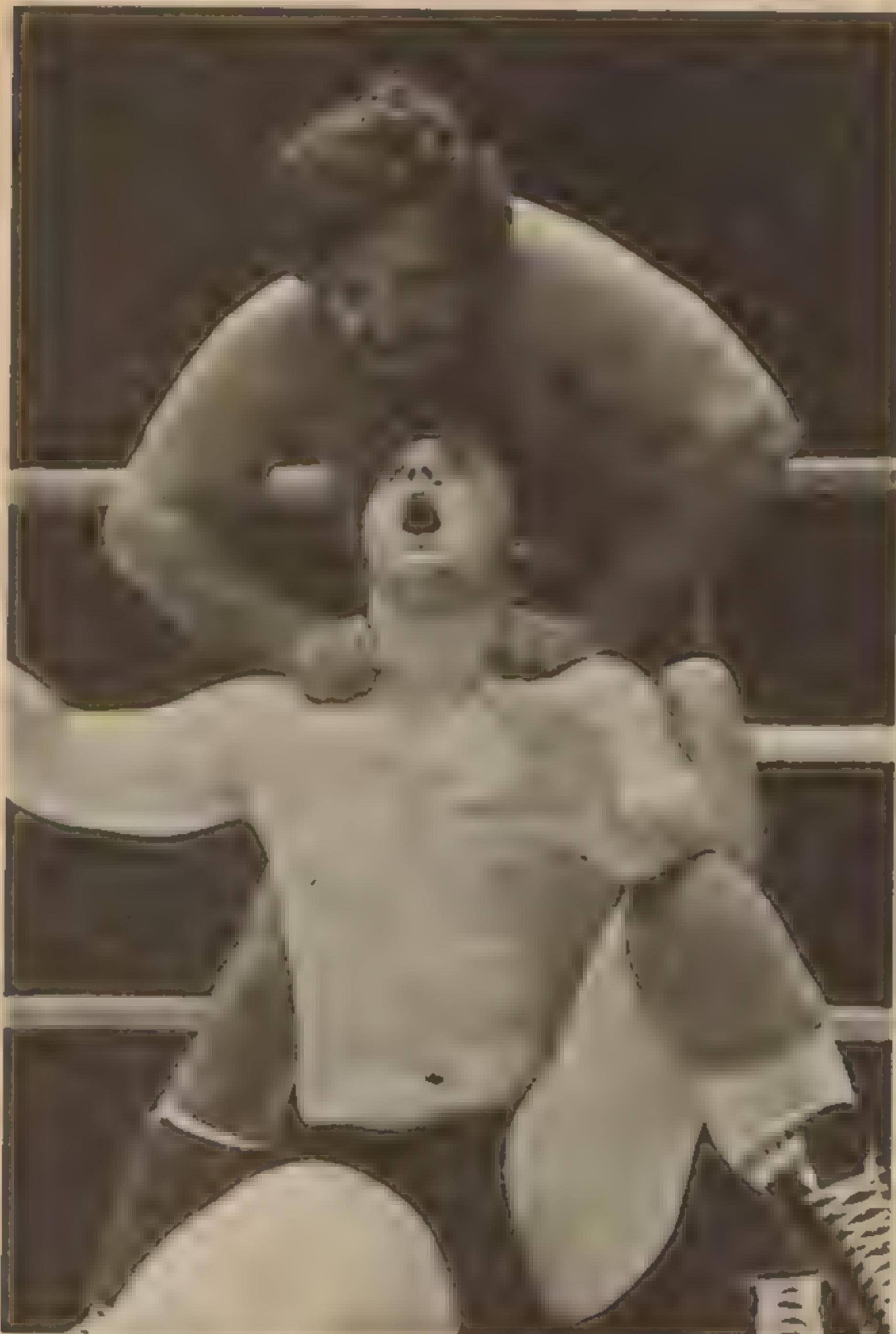
something was happening, something was there, but I couldn't place it at all.

I must have looked pretty out of it, because the man sitting next to me leaned over and asked if I was all right. "I...uh...I...I don't understand." was about all I could

Sheik Adnan Al-Kaissie
Working with a partner to stretch
of the leg.



When Associate Editor Steve Farhood first set eyes on wrestling newcomer Sheik Adnan Al-Kaissie, it was as if a long lost uncle had come home once again. The gnawing suspicion that Farhood might actually be related to this top AWA contender continues to haunt this reporter



It seems hopeless for Hennig as his arms stiffen from the effects of Al-Kaissie's nervehold. Could the mild-mannered Steve Farhood be related to such a man?

say at the time. Then, suddenly, it all came rushing back to me like a prize filly sprinting for the finish

Uncle Ad!! It all makes sense now. Uncle Ad . . . ADnan Al-Kaissie. But it couldn't be. I haven't seen or even heard about Uncle Ad in . . . oh, hell, in at least 15 years.

Uncle Ad was my mother's brother. Along with my mom, he was born in Bagdad. My mom came to the states and settled in Brooklyn during her teens . . . Ad

stayed in Iran.

I remember the story now: my mom got married and settled in Brooklyn with my dad. They had a couple of kids . . . I'm the second oldest son. Uncle Ad came to Brooklyn when I was about six years old, or maybe seven.

All I remember was that he stayed for what seemed like months. He was kind and gentle. He used to entertain me with stories about camel races in Bagdad, all told in his thick Iranian

accent. I never really believed them all, but to this day I still think about them once in a while at Belmont or Aqueduct when I'm watching the thoroughbreds.

Then there was a big falling out, a fiery argument between Uncle Ad and my parents. I remember only a lot of hollering and cursing. My parents, though, tell me that the argument was about me.

An obscure Iranian custom calls for the second male child in the family to be returned to the old country to take over any family business and financial obligations. Since Uncle Ad never got married, he felt this custom applied to his second male nephew—me. My parents bitterly disagreed, and Uncle Ad returned to Bagdad and hadn't been heard from since.

Until now. Maybe. The family resemblance is definitely there. My Uncle Ad was from Bagdad . . . so is Al-Kaissie. From what my parents said, the business obligations I would have inherited were considerable . . . this would account for Al-Kaissie being the richest man in wrestling.

But my Uncle Ad, as I remember him, was a gentle man. I wonder if the fact that he wasn't able to bring me back to the old country has kept him bitter all these years, or maybe something else has sparked off his personality change. One thing is for sure, my Uncle Ad would never have been as brutal as Al-Kaissie was to Hennig that night.

Following the match, I attempted to get into his dressing room to find out if he really is my Uncle Ad. I couldn't.

There was so much security: about a half dozen armed guards surrounding the dressing room door. No one, not even wrestling journalists, were allowed in. Something about threatened assassinations or something.

Someday, though, I'll find out. Someday, I'll know for sure if my uncle is an AWA terrorist. □

Ken Patera's Claim:

"TOMMY RICH IS THROUGH!"



Ken Patera seems obsessed with destroying the fans' image of Tommy Rich. A twist of the arm brings a pained expression from the popular scientific star

KEN PATERA WAS sprawled face down on his training table receiving a rubdown massage prior to his most recent match with Tommy Rich in Atlanta. The mere mention of Rich in the presence of Patera is enough to set off an uncontrollable explosion of hatred and disgust in the Georgia champion.

"Tommy Rich? That bleep?" Patera spat on the floor with intense repugnance. "I totally loathe that beast and everything he stands for... or says he stands for. He's less than a man, he's less than that. He's one of the most disgusting individuals I've ever had to deal with in my life."

Patera's trainer started to work harder, giving Ken a stronger rubdown. "Relax, Ken," the masseuse said,

"you're getting all tense. Your muscles are tightening up like mad, so just try to relax and let me do my job here."

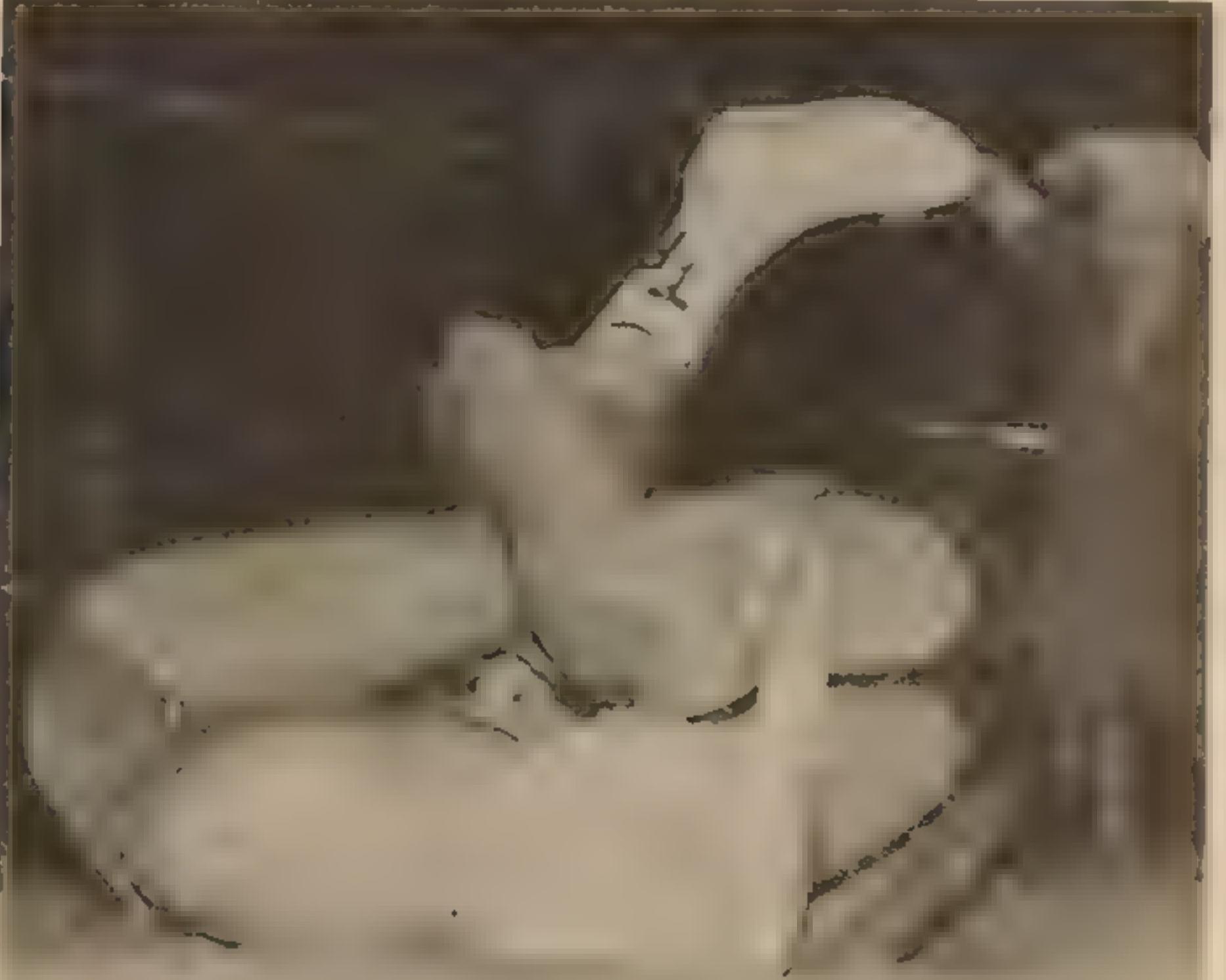
"Yeah, you're right," Patera said, "but every time I even think about that creep, that joke of a wrestler, it makes my blood boil. I just want to go out and start punching out tractor trailers."

Tommy Rich may be the idol of millions of wrestling fans, but to Ken Patera, he's the scum of the earth. Why does Patera insist on perpetuating such a feud, and what brutal plan is he hatching to make his ominous claim a reality?

PHOTOS BY BILL APTER & EMMY YATES



Rich has an uneasy look on his face knowing how hard he is about to be whipped into the turnbuckle (above). Rich just manages to maneuver out of Patera's cradle just before the referee's count reaches three (below). Rich has long considered Patera his toughest opponent



"You can't let yourself get too steamed up about it," replied Ken's trainer, "you've got to learn to relax more, especially when you start talking about Tommy Rich."

"I know, I know. It's so frustrating, though. I mean, somebody like Tommy Rich, somebody who is a nothing, a zero, a complete flop, and people think he's great

"Great? HAH! This loser finally manages to fumble his way to the NWA title, and wouldn't you know it? He fumbles it away again after five days. Five days! He couldn't even hold on to the title for a week! HAHAHA! By the time his mother got the postcard he sent about how he won the title, he lost it again!

"Now take me, for instance. I'm the master of Georgia wrestling, I've held the Georgia title for as long as Rich has known how to tie his own shoe

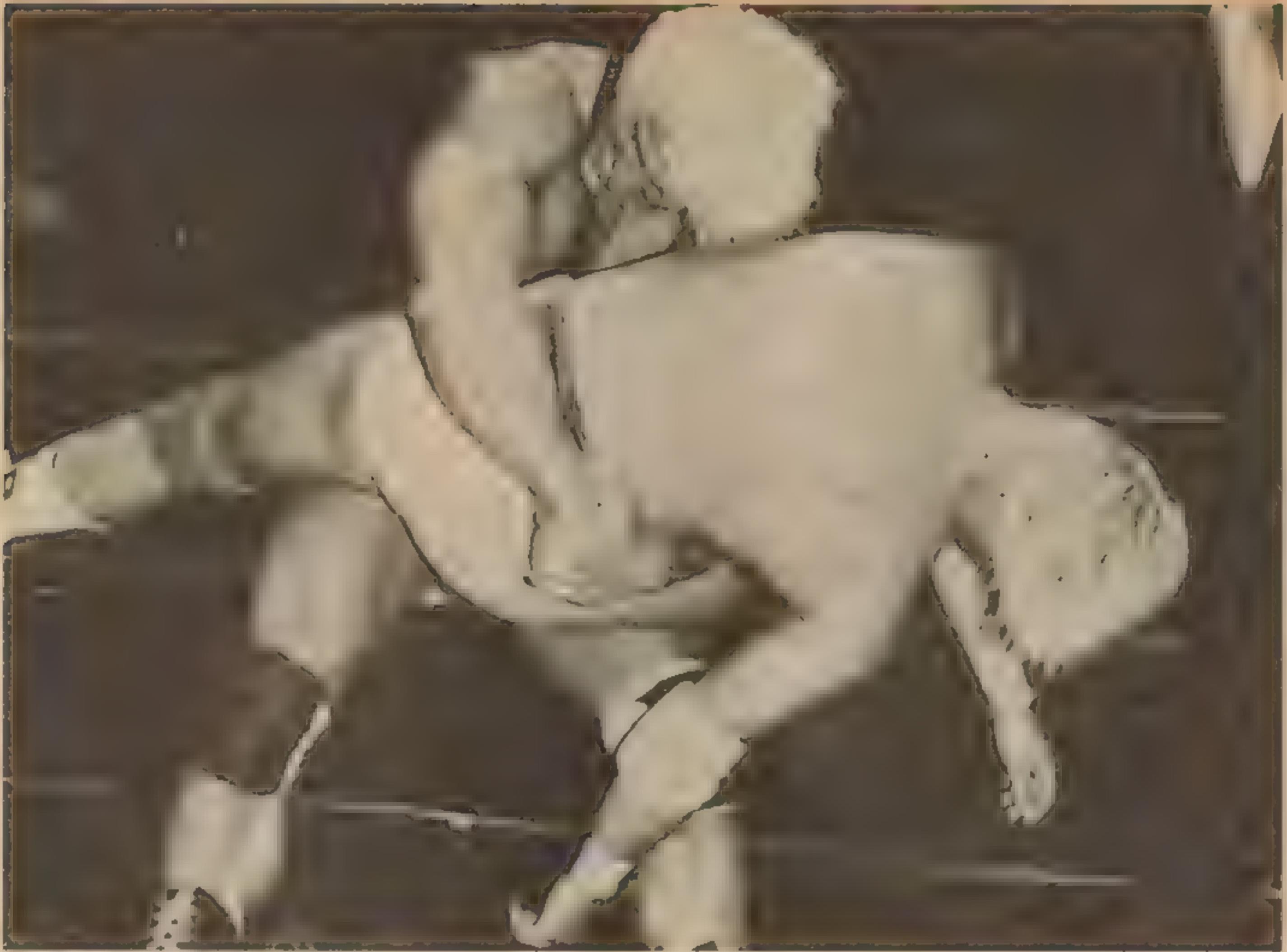
no actually, for quite a bit longer than that—Tommy only learned how to do that last month.

"But I'm the best there is," continued Patera, "I'm the best. I'm the strongest, and that's why I've got the title. But people don't cheer for me the way they cheer for Rich. Kinda makes you realize how stupid people are, doesn't it?"

Patera spat on the floor again as his trainer continued the massage workout

"Yeah, people are really stupid. They never give respect to anybody who deserves it," complained Patera. "You don't see them falling over themselves to respect me, do you? No, they're all a bunch of stupid rednecks and hillbillies. I've got the championship belt, I'm the king of Georgia, and if that doesn't command the respect of these idiot geeks, then nothing ever will."

Patera stood up from the



Though Patera was the eventual loser by disqualification, he is still convinced that Rich's career is drawing to a close. Tommy slumps backward in Patera's powerful arms (above) and absorbs a tremendous series of rights while trapped in an armlock (below).



training table, began running in place for a few minutes, did some quick sit-ups and push-ups, and sat down for a minute.

"You know," he said, "I'm really fed up with that clown Rich. I'm fed up with having to look at his ugly puss when I climb into the ring with him, and I'm fed up with having to read his name in the wrestling magazines, especially when they talk about how the fans go crazy over him."

"I am completely fed up with him, and I swear to you now, in front of everybody in this room, in front of everyone who will ever read this magazine, Tommy Rich is through! He's finished! Gone! That ridiculous five-day excuse for a championship is the closest he'll ever come to being a champion now—or ever again!"

Patera was enraged, but

obviously enjoying himself as he stormed about the training room, psyching himself up for the match he was about to enter.

"When I go out there tonight, and I see that ugly face of Tommy's, I'm gonna know exactly what to do. And I'll tell you right now, what I'm gonna do is not gonna be what Tommy Rich expects. He's through, do you hear me? Tommy Rich is through!"

Ken Patera jogged out of the room and into the arena, prepared to wage war against Tommy Rich. War it was, as a brutal melee ensued, testing the wits and strength of both wrestlers to their maximum.

When it was all over, Ken Patera had retained his Georgia title after getting disqualified. As he left the ring, he could still be heard chanting "Through! Tommy Rich is through!" □



Bruno &

WILL THEY WWF'S WRESTLE EARLY?

PHOTOS BY BILL APTER

Bruno Sammartino, wrestling's living legend, locks up Stan Hansen's chin.

PRESSURE FROM ALI corners seems to be mounting. Fans are demanding the match. Promoters are demanding the match. Even some of wrestling's top officials and administrators are beginning to demand the match that, if it ever came off, would be considered by many the contest of the decade: Bruno Sammartino against Mil Máscaras.

"It would probably be not only the match of the decade, but the match of all time!" said wrestling analyst Eddie Feder. "We're talking about two of the greatest living legends in wrestling, here, two of the greatest wrestlers of all time. I hope the match happens."

Most public opinion seems to agree with what Feder has to say, though some of the veterans question the purpose of such a match.

"Yeah, I suppose a match between Bruno and Mil would be exciting," said crusty Matt Brock, wrestling journalist supreme, "but what could either one get out of it? I mean come on, let's look at this logically. Is either one going to get a shot at Backlund and the title? Never!"

"A shot at the title is the best reason to enter into any match,"

Mascaras

WHY DEFY THE ORDER TO FIGHT EACH OTHER?



Mil Mascaras, a man with a thousand masks and holds to match, takes Killer Khan to the canvas.

continued Brock as he downed a healthy swig of bourbon, "so that takes care of the main reason these two should meet in the ring. The other major reason is that these two guys should want to wrestle. Sure, the fans would love to see it, but if Bruno and Mil don't want it bad enough, the match isn't worth having."

Recently, *The Wrestler* caught up to Bruno and Mil Mascaras in Hartford, Connecticut, where both men were wrestling on the same card. For months rumors had been surfacing that there would actually be a Bruno Mascaras match that night in Hartford, but those of

course proved to be false.

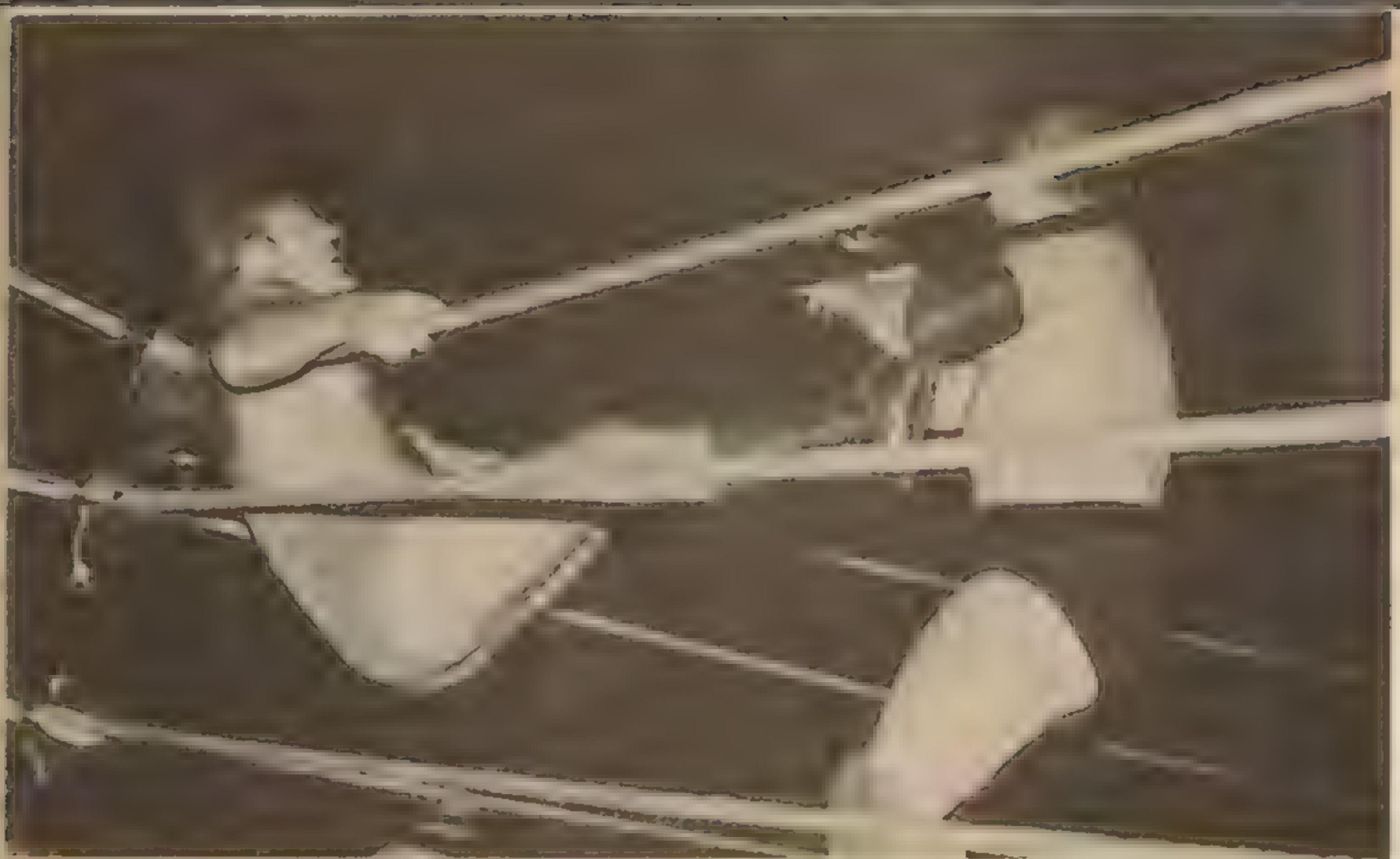
Following his match against Stan Hansen, Bruno Sammartino had some things to say about Mil Mascaras and a potential match with the masked legend.

"You know, I've always said that I could beat Mascaras," Sammartino said, "but I'll tell you, doggone, I've got to admire the man. I think it would be a great match, and I think I would come out on top. But what would it prove?"

"Mascaras, though, is easily one of the best scientific wrestlers

When everyone around you from fans to promoters to officials tell you that you should wrestle in a particular match, what do you do? And what do you do when the pressure becomes so intense that even the top men in the WWF are considering an order for you to wrestle?





Bruno, who is firmly entrenched in the annals as one of the sport's all-time greats, uses the turnbuckles for support as he kicks a charging Hansen (above). Hansen, who broke Bruno's neck and nearly ended his career years ago, catches a knee to the face (right).

around today. He's got a tremendous attitude towards this sport and commands a massive amount of respect out of the fans. I would hate to be the one to destroy that for him."

Later that same evening, following his match with Killer Khan, Mil Mascaras also addressed the continuing rumors of a Mascaras Sammartino faceoff.

"I like Bruno," said the masked wrestler, "and I think he's done more for the sport of wrestling than just about anyone else alive. The man is an institution all by himself, practically a one-man hall of fame."

"I have to go along with what he said, though. I don't believe that the winner of a match between the two of us would ever see Backlund in the ring. I don't think either one of us really wants to wrestle the other. It's not as if there is a feud between



us, that we would be wrestling a grudge match, because that simply isn't the case."

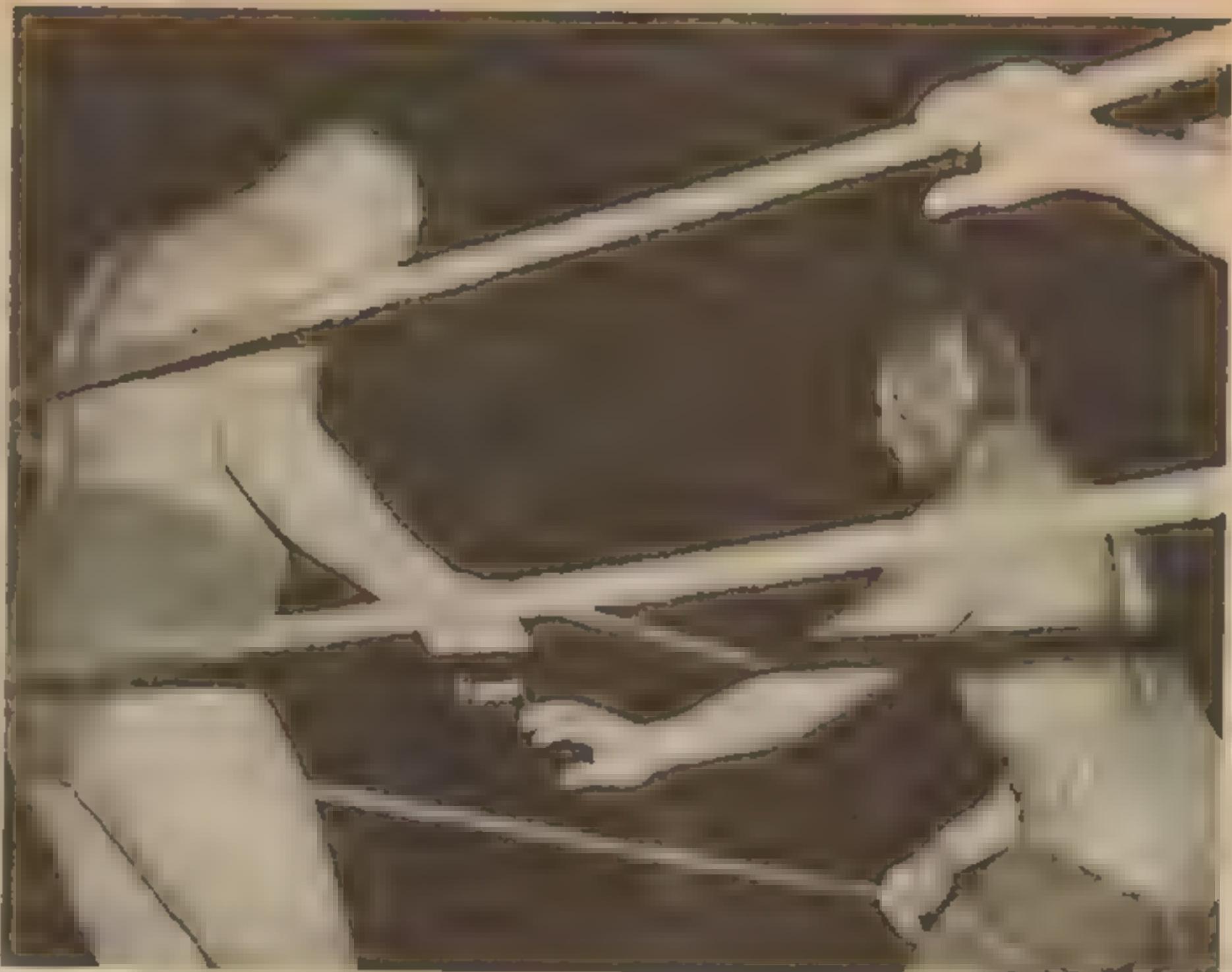
Yet still the rumors spread. The latest news comes from a high level WWF source who claims that contracts have already been drawn up and are on their way to the offices of both Sammartino and Mascaras.

The same source also reports that legal maneuvering is being undertaken by lawyers under contract to the WWF to scrutinize the Federation's bylaws and perhaps send down some sort of order that Mascaras and Bruno *must* meet in the ring. Apparently, though, there are many loose ends which must be taken care of before any definite action can be taken on the part of the WWF officials.

Whatever the legal procedures, whatever the attitudes of the two wrestlers involved, we can be sure

that the pressure will not stop so easily. The fans want to see these two powerhouse superstars together, and so do officials and promoters.

Ultimately, though, the question of whether these two men meet in the squared circle depends on themselves. Perhaps fan pressure will cause them to change their minds. Or perhaps they will remain firm in their attitude that nothing positive could come of such a match. □



TERRY FUNK VS. JERRY LAWLER

IT HAS GOT to be the most vicious feud ever to grip the Southeast. In particular, the states of Tennessee and Florida are taking the brunt of the attack. When Terry Funk and Jerry Lawler go at it, the shrapnel flies, and you'd better run for cover.

It's a bitter rivalry, with long, healthy roots that span many years. Some time ago, Terry Funk snagged the NWA title, a feat which made Lawler something less than happy. Jerry decided he would take care of Funk once and for all, even if it took him years.

Well, years later, the battle rages on. The only difference is that now it has increased drastically in intensity.

Currently, the major campaigns in this war are being waged in Tennessee, though the conflict has been spreading into the Florida area as well. Two recent matches in Tennessee, though, offer conclusive evidence that this war is far from over. Indeed, it may just be beginning to build up steam.

"You'd better believe that I'm only getting started," says Jerry Lawler, "because there's a lot of damage I want to do to that punk Funk before I'm done. Tonight, I hope to get a good start on some of it!"

Lawler was referring to a savage match within a wire fence in Tennessee, merely one of a series of awesome contests wreaking havoc all across the state.

The two arch-enemies traded blows in the 'ring for what seemed an eternity. But their ferocious anger was too strong

Jawler desperately tries to ward off Funk's foreign object.



FOCUS ON ABRUPT SERIES OF MATCHES

Two angry men, caught in a vicious cycle of kill or be killed. A deadly feud that spans years. A bloody rivalry that threatens to spread across half a dozen states or more. How long can Terry Funk and Jerry Lawler continue to brutalize each other. And how long before one of them cracks under the strain?



Bleeding and exhausted both men barely beat the referee's count (above). Awesome brutality as Lawler digs his fingers into Funk's cut forehead while Terry rips at Jerry's eyes (right). Lawler tries to force Funk over the top rope (below)



to be contained within the limits of the ring, and the action spread to the floor area surrounding the ring

Funk was downed by a stunning series of leg blows. While he was attempting to regain his breath, Lawler pushed aside a fan, grabbed his chair, and proceeded to use it to smash the head of the still-groggy Funk.

"I'd like to know where the referee was," said Funk following that match. "I'll tell you, after that shot with the chair, I hardly knew where I was, much less the ref. That was an amazingly sleazy move on the part of Lawler, and I'll get my revenge, you can be sure of that."

Terry Funk's chance for revenge came just a few days



His face bandaged during their next encounter, Funk attempts a spinning toehold (above left). Outside the ring, Funk's cuts open as Lawler goes on a brutal offensive (above right). Lawler viciously slams a chair across Funk's hip as a steel stanchion collapses on his side (below).

later, again in Tennessee. This time, it was a Texas Death Match.

There is no denying that these two men wrestled each other as if it were their last match. The brutality that was unleashed in so short a time span was astonishing.

Less than three minutes into the match, the heads of both wrestlers were bloody messes, testament to the intense hate that each man feels for the other.

This time, Terry Funk was able to incur some damage of his own upon the person of Jerry Lawler, being the one to have drawn blood first, and the wrestler to have maintained the offensive for the longest time.

"I was psyched to demolish that goon," said Funk following the Death Match. "I really wanted to spill a lot of his blood tonight, and I did manage to squeeze out the first drops. But they didn't have to bring in the



medics for a transfusion, and that's about how much bloodshed I was prepared for. I damaged him pretty well, anyhow."

Jerry Lawler vehemently disagrees with Funk's interpretation of the match.

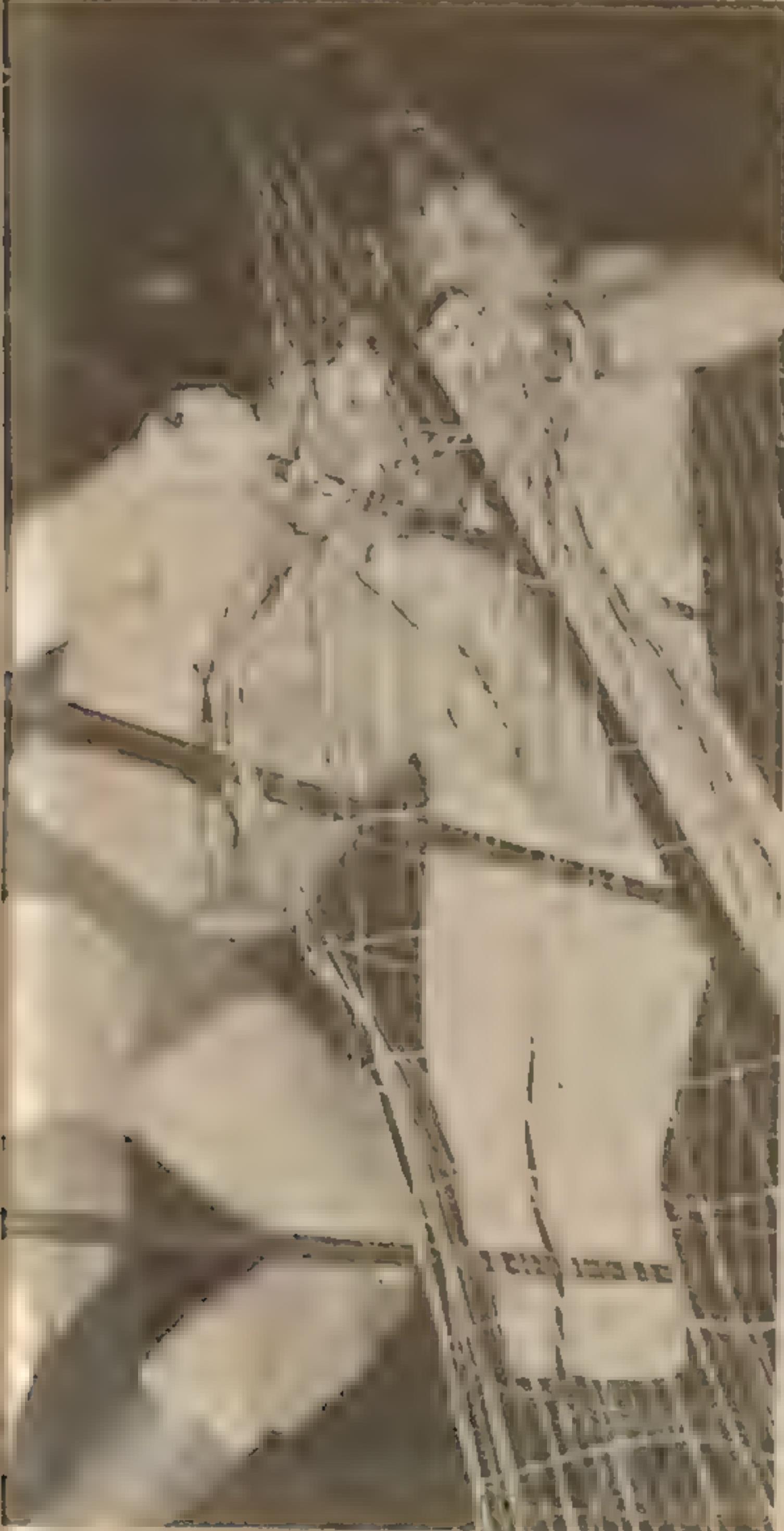
"If Terry thinks he hurt me, he's got another thing coming," Lawler snarled. "Sure, my face was bloodied a little bit, but it

looked a whole lot worse than it actually was. I'd have to say that the wounds I gave to Funk are deeper than what he gave to me. But just wait until the next match, boy, then you'll see what a wound really is. I'll have that bozo drowning in his own blood and begging for mercy."

So it goes, one man pitted against another in a see-saw battle that both are determined

to win. And the war is spreading. Matches easily as brutal as these two recent Tennessee matches have been held in Florida as well.

Who knows? Soon the combined fury of Funk and Lawler may spread to engulf the entire eastern seaboard. It's a distinct possibility: as of now, virtually nothing is able to contain their violence. □



The wire fence was intended to keep both wrestlers in the ring. The wrestlers decided it would serve a better function as a weapon.



THE RETURN OF ANDRE THE GIANT

SEVERAL MONTHS HAD passed since the brutal mutilation of Andre the Giant by Killer Khan. When the Mongolian maniac broke Andre's leg, fans and professionals alike began to debate how long it would take for Andre to recover and, when he finally did recover, whether or not he

would be as strong and effective as he was before.

"The break was relatively severe," said Dr. Allen Wyck of the Northeast Center for Athletic Physiology in Rochester, New York. "Andre has tremendous recuperative powers, though The fact that such a massive fracture in the leg has been



After starting cautiously, Andre was impressive in his return appearance against the rugged Sgt. Slaughter.

restored in so short a time is a near miracle in itself.

"Speaking from professional experience," Dr. Wyck continued, "I would say that Andre should have little trouble regaining his old power. The only troubles he might encounter would be psychological. Physically, though, he should be performing at 100 percent of his capabilities."

The first match Andre was to wrestle in since his convalescence took place at C.W. Post College on Long Island. Andre wanted to test himself against the strongest opponent he could find prior to his revenge match against Killer Khan in Madison Square Garden. Andre bravely sign to test his abilities against Sgt. Slaughter

Before the match, Andre expressed some nervousness about reentering the ring

"It's been a few months," explained Andre, "so naturally I'm little nervous. It's a big match for me. I know all the doctors are telling me that my leg is fine now, that I can wrestle just like I did before. But no matter how many doctors say that, I'll still be nervous until I actually wrestle.

"I guess this is an important match to the fans, too," said Andre in one of his greater understatements of the year. Indeed, it was such an important match that there was national media coverage of the event.

"For me, this is more of a test run before my match with Khan," said Andre. "If I can get

(Continued on page 64)

Months ago, Killer Khan viciously attacked Andre the Giant, breaking his leg and keeping him out of action in the ring . . . until recently. Yet Andre still harbors doubts about his strength and stamina. Can Andre overcome potential doubts about his strength and stamina to make a successful return?

"TO ALL MY LOVE SLAVES"

A Letter From Hulk Hogan

To all my love slaves and lifelong dedicated fans:

Your true uncrowned champion, "ME," is in the best shape of my career. Mentally and physically I am second to none and should be given the chance to prove that I am capable of holding the WWF, AWA, and NWA belts all at the same time.

Recently I left the WWF area to answer the cries of Hollywood's heavyweights to please accept a major role in a major film, *Rocky III*. Being the ultimate object of desire, the molten mountain of lust, and the undisputed champion of the world forced Hollywood to use my services. Female friends

piled up easily and all of Hollywood immediately started calling me "Thunderlips." Naturally I made *Rocky III* "movie of the year" just by showing my body.

Now all of the world will get to see the Ultimate Male, Hulk "Thunderlips" Hogan, destroy their former dream boy Rocky.

The real superhero of the '80s "Thunderlips" is here to stay. Now every day has a meaning. My fans and love slaves can look forward to seeing more and more of their superhero, "ME," on film, TV, and your local newsstand.

**Train like a savage,
Hulk "Thunderlips" Hogan**



BONUS PINUP



HULK "Thunderlips" HOGAN

Open Letter To Rick Steamboat

DON'T FORGET THE REASONS THEY CALL LEROY BROWN "BAD"

Dear Rick Steamboat:

We at *The Wrestler* are worried about you. We're not worried about what you're doing now, or about something you've done in the past, but we are worried about what may happen to you in the near future.

You are now teaming with Leroy Brown. But that's not his full name . remember, he's called "Bad" Leroy Brown, and there are a lot of good reasons why. He's earned that name more than once over the years, and you should never forget it.

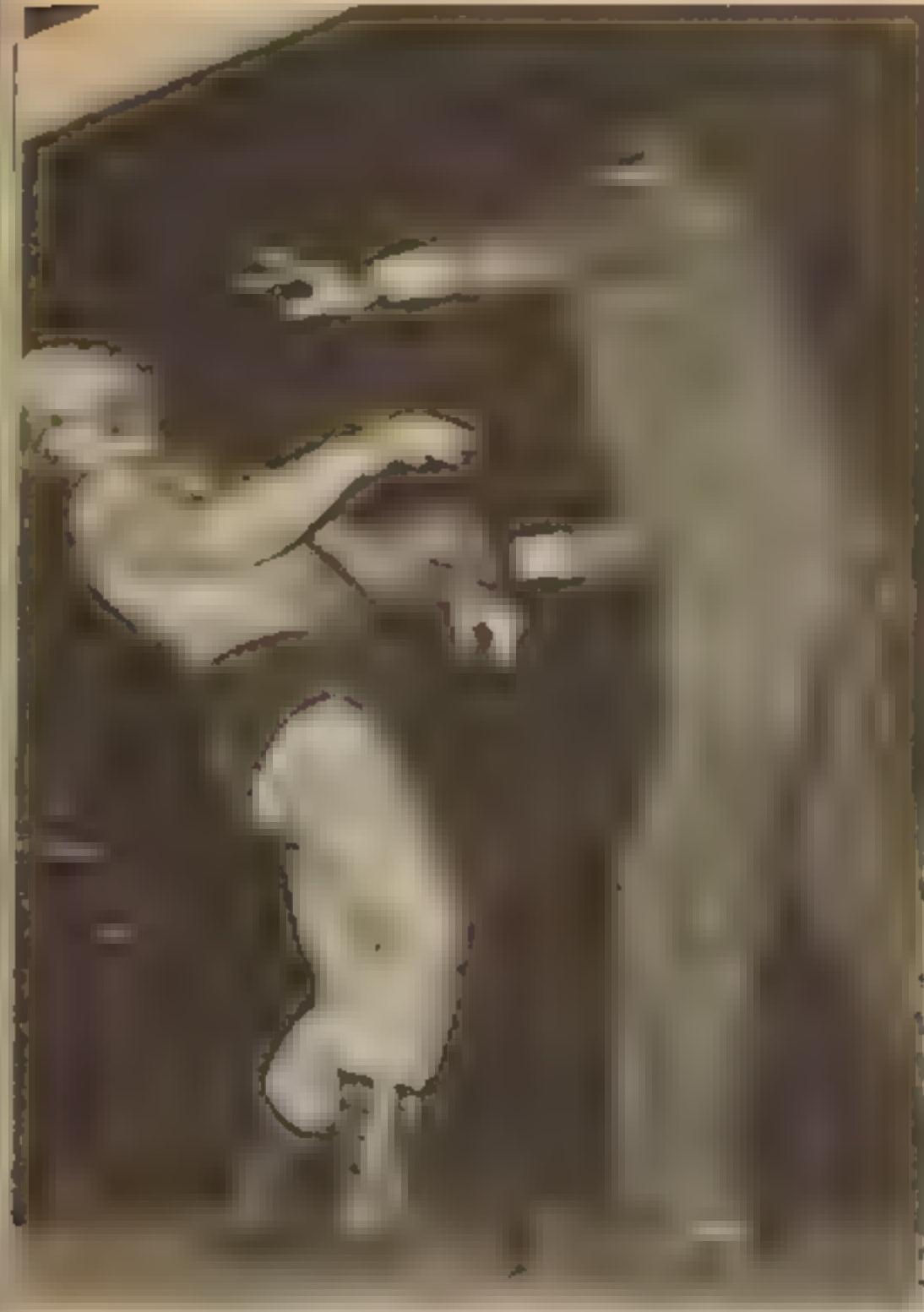
Remember: just like the wolf in sheep's clothing, the wolf may shed its false skin and reveal itself for what it truly was all the time.

Just like this wolf, beware that "Bad" Leroy Brown does not cloak himself in a false skin of friendship and comraderie. Beware that you are not taken in by a treacherous plot designed to ultimately destroy you.

We do not mean to sound too paranoid, Rick, but bear with us while we review recent history for you. Then consider for yourself how dangerous it might be if history decided to repeat itself.

There are times when the combined institutions of some of wrestling's expert journalists create a nagging, annoying impression that just won't go away. Such is the case with Bad Leroy Brown, and we feel compelled to warn Brown's current partner, Rick Steamboat, about the dangers, which may await him in the near future.





While it certainly appears that Bad Leroy Brown is loyal to his new partner and new cause, it must be remembered why he is called "Bad." The powerful Brown shoves Ole Anderson back (above). Ole punishes Steamboat (right). Even before he could get his belt off, Ole gets a demonstration of the new Brown (below).



Remember back to California, back to where Bad Leroy Brown confounded fans and wrestlers alike who didn't know what side of the street Brown was playing on. Those were the days where one didn't know whether to trust Brown or to run like a demon away from him.

Then it was on to New Orleans for Brown. He teamed with Ernie Ladd, one of the meanest wrestlers ever to climb through the ropes. Certainly not a man to be trusted.

So recently this dubiously trustworthy man, this wrestler who teams with the likes of Ladd, this man who is known by the name of Bad Leroy Brown surfaces in the Mid-Atlantic region as—would you believe—a troubleshooting referee?

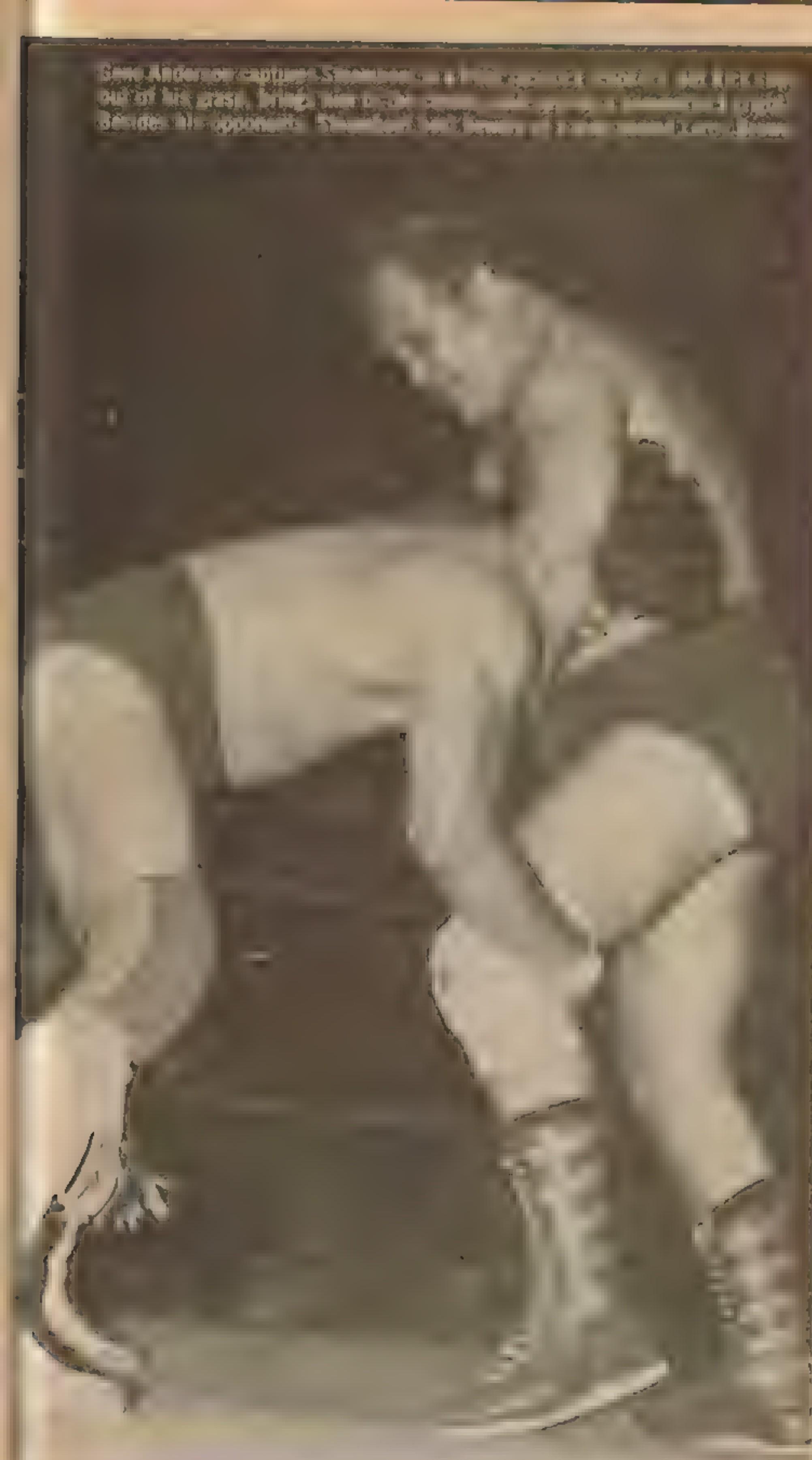
First of all, we would ask you, Rick, how can you even condone a

man like Brown becoming a referee, a position which requires a certain amount of esteem and honor in a man. Do you really think Bad Leroy could turn himself around 180 degrees and become a reliable referee?

So now you and he have joined forces, and you're getting involved in a feud with the Andersons. Rick, please remember: Bad Leroy Brown's feud with the Andersons is not your own, so don't make it your own. You should not be getting involved in other men's arguments unless you wholeheartedly believe in their cause as your own. We believe that you do not.

Rick, be careful. We have reason to believe that this may be a calculated attempt to sandbag you, to suck you into a plot that might ultimately destroy you. You've

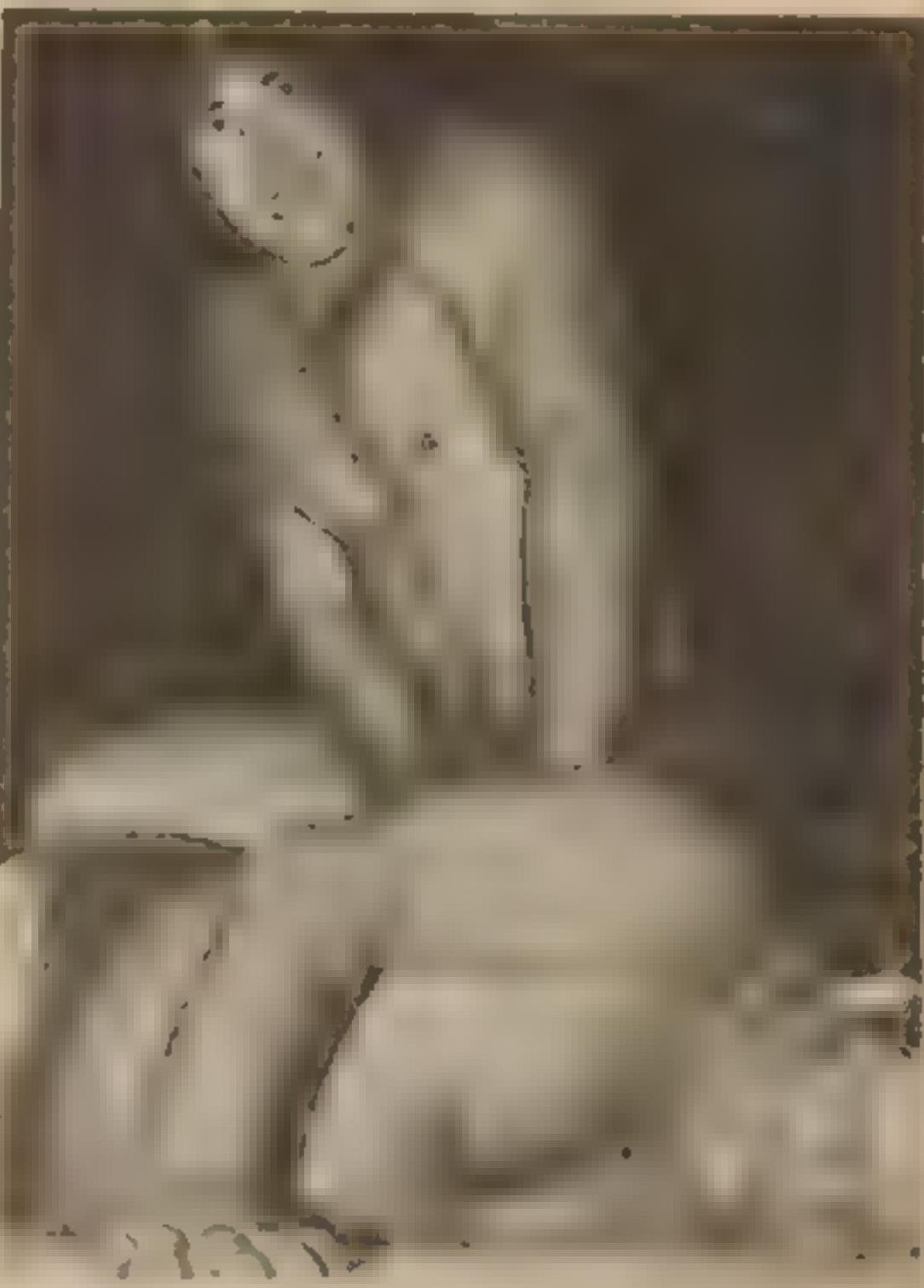




face of the sport of wrestling

You've seen in the past that Bad Leroy is not a completely reliable person. The mail to you should reflect this as well. Your fans know what Leroy has stood for, as well as the threat that he potentially poses to you and your wrestling career.

We have to stress, Rick, that we do not know for certain of any disreputable conspiracy against



your career. Our collective feelings as the editorial staff of this magazine stem from mostly gut feelings and the combined years of experience and observation of the wrestlers we've run across.

Our collective feelings tell us to warn you, Rick. They tell us to warn you as strongly as possible that things may not be precisely what they seem to be at the moment. They tell us that you should be aware of potential dangers that you might not have been aware of before.

We hope we are wrong. But our warning and advice stands: Rick, please, remember why Leroy Brown is known as BAD Leroy Brown.

Sincerely,
The Editors □

seen what Leroy has been like in the past, why do you insist on ignoring all that has gone on for years?

If you do decide to stay with Bad Leroy Brown, Rick, please

remember that his name is Bad. Please keep one eye on your matches and one eye on your partner. We would not like to see you the victim of an insidious plan designed to eradicate you from the

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WHAT'S HAPPENING

(Continued from Page 8)

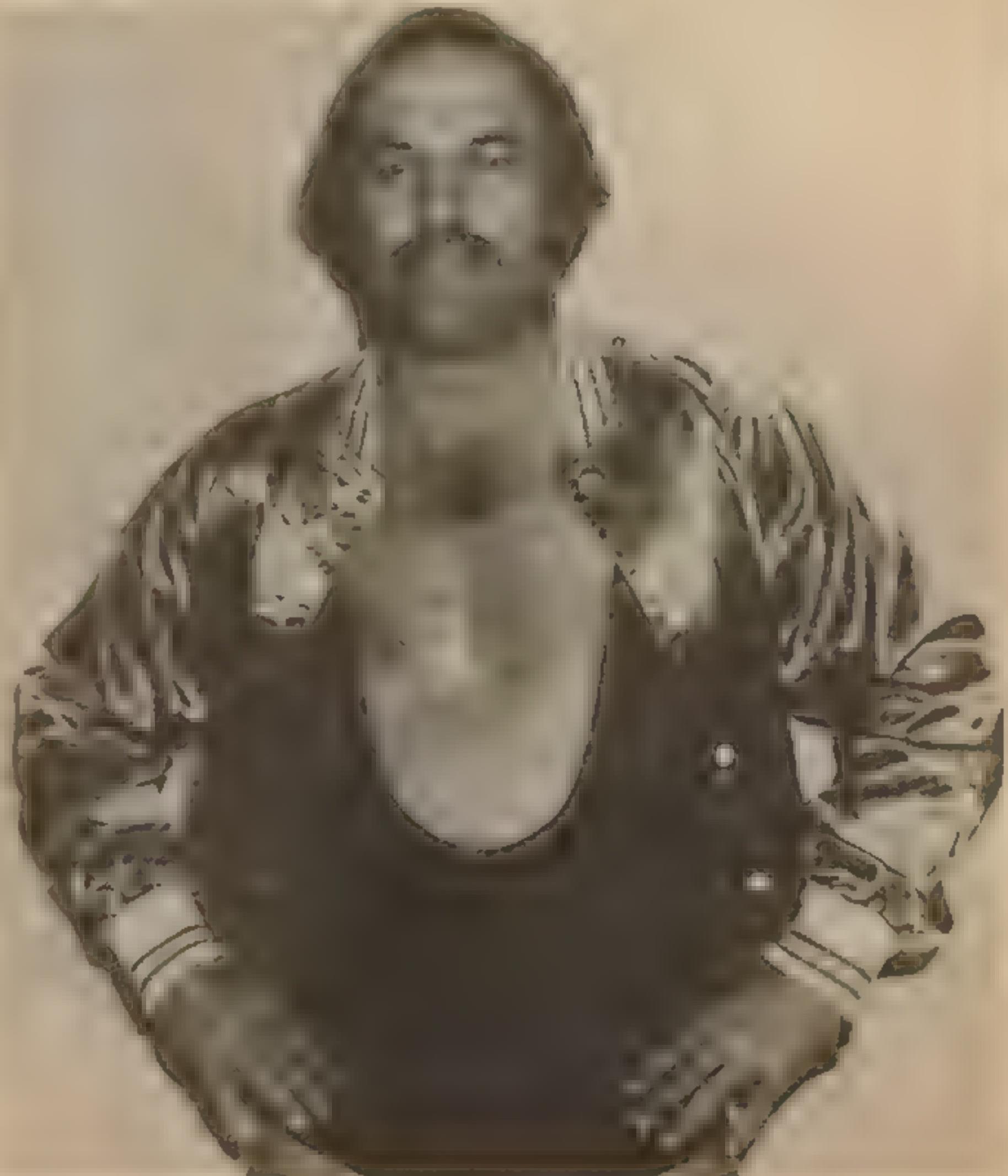
too bad, even I began to trust him. I will have to be the avenger for the fans and whip his butt for spitting in their faces."

Rookie Brad Armstrong is in the hospital following a vicious double-teaming attack by Randy Rose and Dennis Condrey... Bad Leroy Brown is surprising his harshest critics by staying on the scientific side of the sport. Tommy Gilbert has a \$5,000 bounty on his head, courtesy of Jim Kent. Kent will pay that bundle of dough to any wrestler who can end Tommy's career... Bubba Douglas is doing a fine job as a special NWA referee in Florida

"The Anderson Brothers are going to pay in blood for what they

did to me!" That's the threat set down by Ric Flair, who was brutally double-teamed by Gene and Ole in a Steel Cage Match and nearly crippled... Tommy Wright is the new owner of the U.S. Jr. Heavyweight title having won a tournament in Dothan, Alabama. Robert Fuller is out of action for an indefinite period of time after his match against Mr. Saito. Saito held Fuller in a sleeper-hold for a full five minutes! Doctors are afraid that Ron's senses will not return to their full usage for quite some time.

Correspondents Scott Koznegay reports that "The Candy Man," Ray Candy, has won the Alabama title from Jimmy Golden... King



Tommy Gilbert is in severe danger. Rulebreaker manager Jim Kent has offered a \$5,000 "bounty" to the man that will end Tommy's career. Gilbert says he is amused by the offer and not worried.

Kong Mosca says he is totally satisfied with his most recent match against Pat Patterson, although he was disqualified. "I wanted to be as vicious as I could," Mosca explained. "Getting disqualified proved my point. I totally annihilated that bum Patterson."

You'll be seeing a feature story on this item soon, but I just had to tell you. George "The Animal" Steele was invited to our posh New York photo studio for a portrait session. Editor-In-Chief Peter King, Associate Editor Stu Saks, and myself were astonished when



The assessment of damage was over \$2,000 as George Steele went animal in our New York City photo studio.

"The Animal" went wild and wrecked the studio, causing thousands of dollars of damage.

The Assassins are the men responsible for the shoulder separation suffered by Jerry Brisco. "That's one Brisco down and one more to go," says Assassin #3.

Greg Valentine has severely injured the legs of six WWF wrestlers en route to his final goal of breaking both of WWF champion Bob Backlund's legs.

U.S. Champion Roddy Piper threw a big bash at a Richmond, Virginia, restaurant to celebrate his 150th title defense.

That's all for now fans. See you at the matches. □

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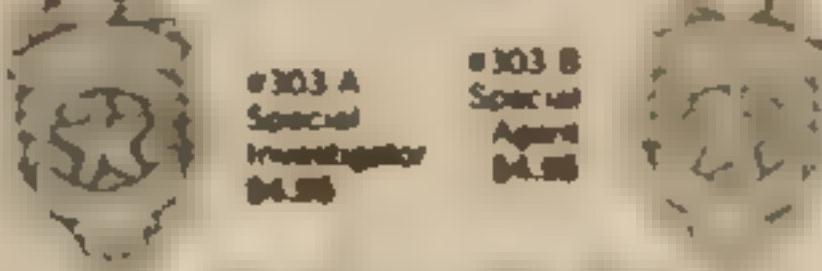
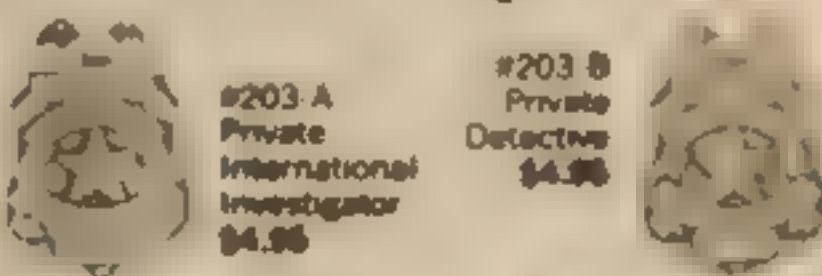
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Interests: Drama, writing, travel and volunteering for United Way

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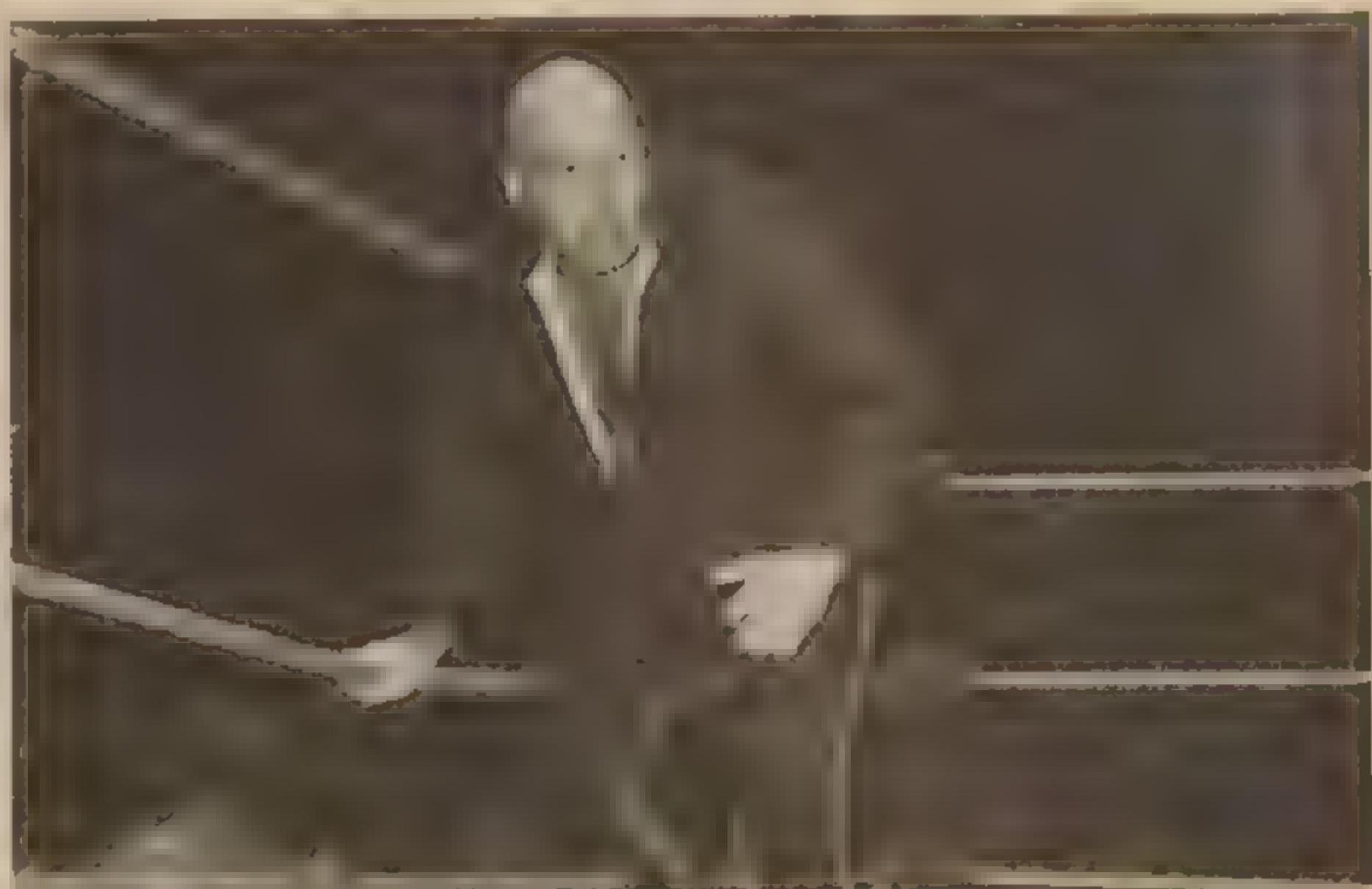
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CORRESPONDENT REPORTS

(Continued from Page 10)



George Steele had Bob Backlund in deep trouble but the WWF champion's agility and resourcefulness proved to be the deciding factors in his title retention at Madison Square Garden.

NEW YORK, NY—Correspondent: Michael Ciampa—Madison Square Garden was the setting for one of the best cards of the year. The main event pitted Bob Backlund against George "The Animal" Steele. During the first minute of the match, Bob had command until George brought out a plastic knife and stuck Backlund with it. Then George twice put Backlund into his feared flying hammerlock. It looked like Bob was really in trouble. Then the unexpected happened. Steele tried a third time to put the hammerlock on. But Bob was ready. Backlund snapmared Steele, dropkicked him, then finished him off.

In other bouts, Pedro Morales was disqualified in a match with Don Muraco . . . Johnny Rodz defeated Terry Gunn . . . Dom DeNucci was downed by Sgt. Slaughter.

PORT ARTHUR, TX—Correspondent: Nolan Nicks—The Southwest heavyweight title was on the line as Manny Fernandez met Col. Buck Robley in a savage match. First, Robley attacked

Fernandez and gave him a severe beating, but Fernandez came back and began to take Robley apart. Then both men started battling outside the ring, using any weapon possible. Finally Fernandez threw Robley into the ring and finished him off, keeping his title.

In other bouts, Lou Thesz over Larry Lane . . . Kelly Kiniski downed Nick Hozack . . . Tiger Conway Jr. and Tony Atlas defeated Gino Hernandez and Tully Blanchard by disqualification.

ORLANDO, FL—Correspondent: Nick Bocuzzi—In a wild brawl for the Florida heavyweight title, Dory Funk Jr. took on Jerry "The King" Lawler. Dory came out with his brother Terry so Lawler went and got Sweet Brown Sugar. This led to two wild brawls, one inside and one outside of the ring! Dory was using forearms when Lawler blew his top and started using closed fist punches which got him disqualified.

In other bouts, Sweet Brown Sugar beat Assassin #3 . . . Charlie Cook whipped Terry Funk . . . Assassin #1 dropped a decision to Jerry Brisco. □

YOU ASKED US

(Continued from Page 12)



A bloody Ric Flair slumps into a corner after a grueling battle with the Russian Bear, Ivan Koloff

Q: "Could you ask Ric Flair what he is going to do about Roddy Piper and Ivan Koloff?"—Rhonda Hamilton, Rutherford, NC

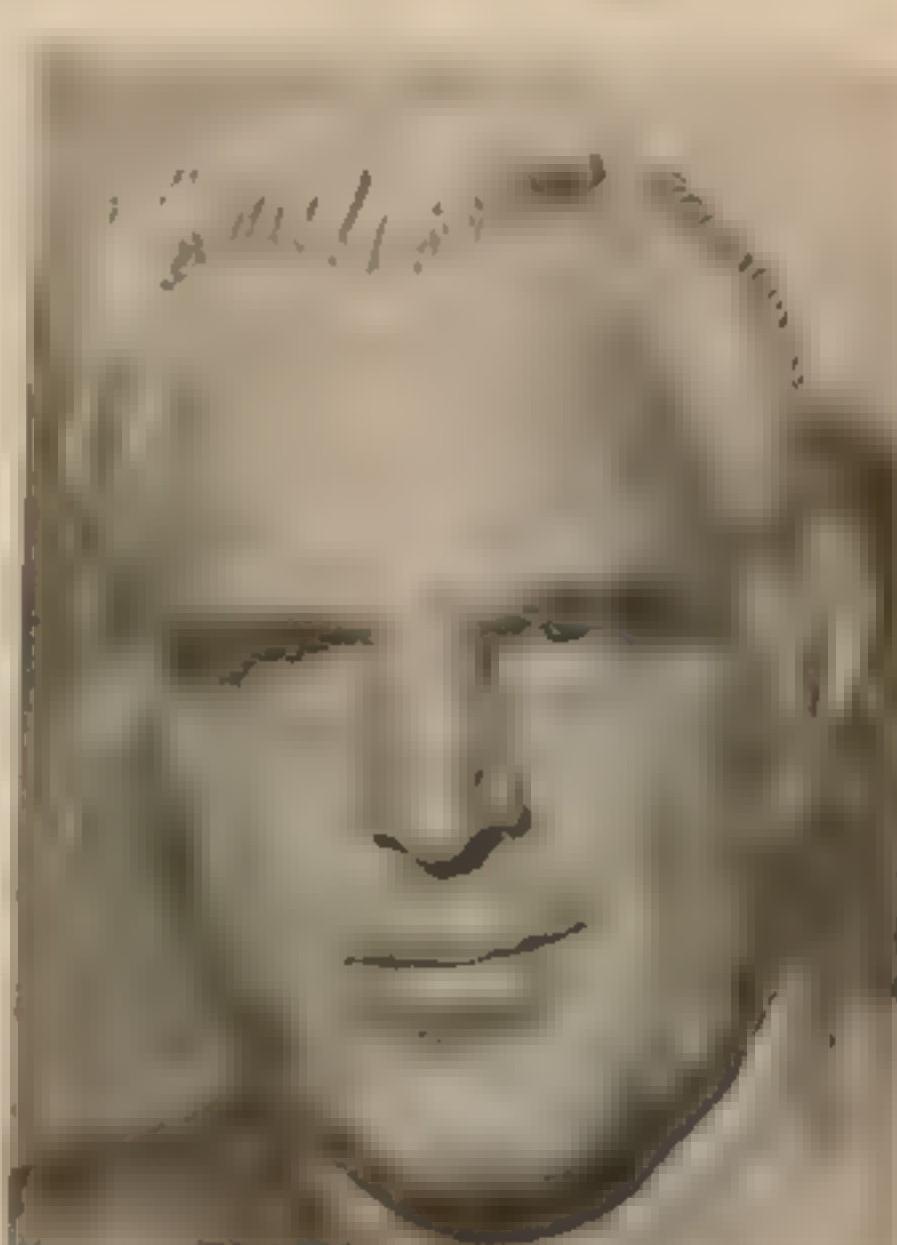
A: "I will fight them until they are defeated," Flair promises. "I have had numerous matches against Piper, and a few against Koloff. They're tough, all right, but I think I will prove I'm a little tougher." ■

Q: "How does Magnificent Muraco feel about Bob Backlund and the WWF belt? By the way, Muraco is my favorite wrestler"—John Green, Honolulu, HI

A: Muraco was thrilled to receive fan mail from a fellow Hawaiian. "It just goes to prove that people from the 50th state are more intelligent than you geeks on the polluted mainland," Muraco said. "As for Backlund and his belt—it's like eating a coconut. I want the sweet milk of the title. But first I've got to crack open the nut. I'll crack open Backlund's head and take his title. And then, just like the coconut shell, Backlund will be ready for the garbage."

Q: "With all the rulebreakers running amuck here in Florida, does Eddie Graham have any plans for a comeback?"—Lester Gerstein, Miami, FL

A: We found Eddie Graham relaxing on the beach in Key West. "Well, the thought has occurred to me from time to time," said Graham, "but I know I really have to control the urge. No, I sympathize with the problems scientific wrestlers are having in Florida, but it's really not my battle anymore."



Though often tempted, Eddie Graham has not returned to the ring since announcing his retirement.

Q: "I would like to know how Bob Backlund felt when he was spit on by King Kong Mosca on national TV"—Peter Travassos, Fall River, MA

A: "It was the most humiliating moment of my life," said the WWF champion. "I can never remember wanting to destroy someone as much as I wanted to destroy Mosca. And I think I taught him a lesson when we wrestled." □

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Q&A

(Continued from Page 21)

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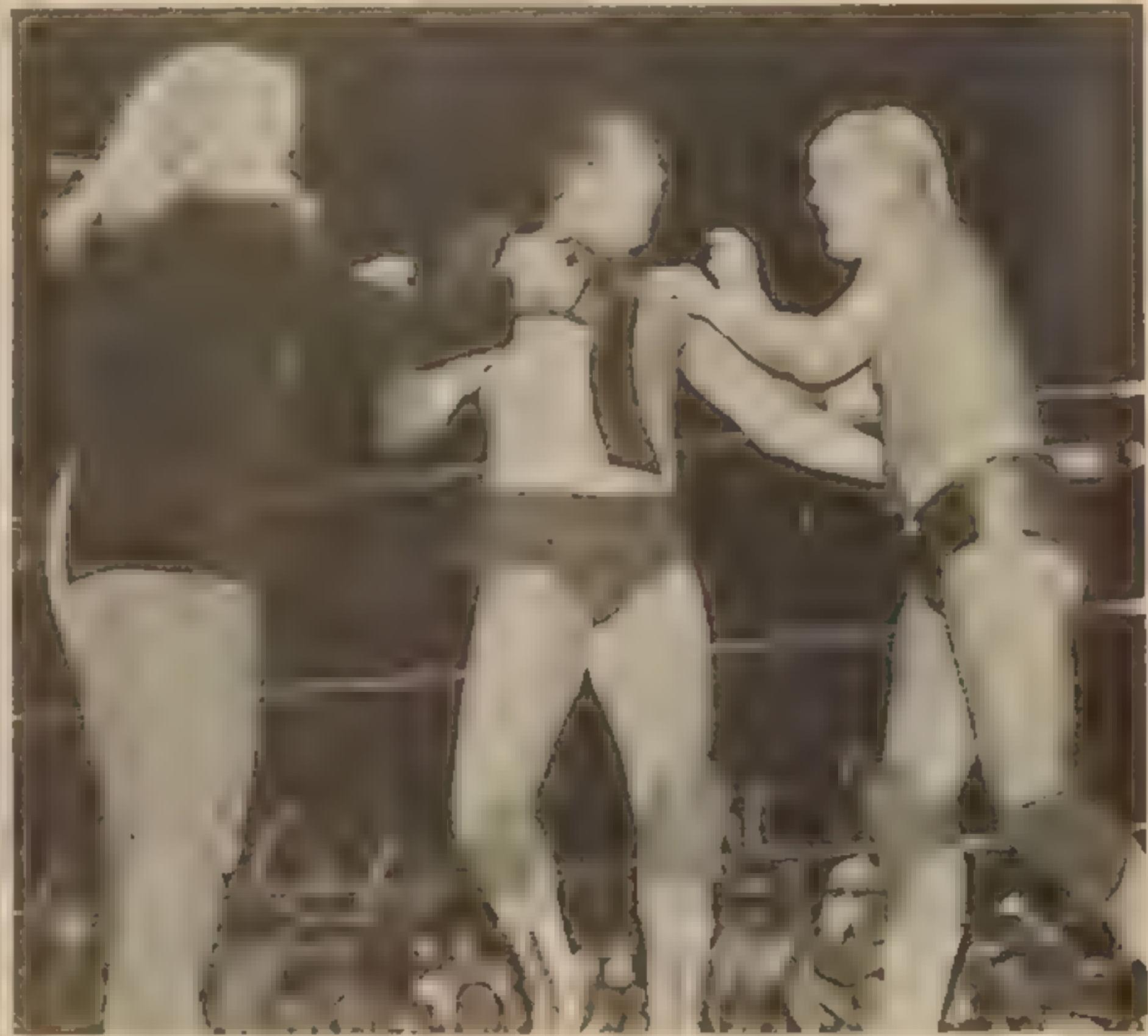
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Hayes awards the Georgia belts to Ted DiBiase and Tommy Rich (above), but the NWA had to reverse the decision. Hayes stomps Cocoa Samoa during darker days as a Freebird (below).



I had to change. If my brother is going to learn from me, I've got to be an angel, not a sinner.

Q: How did your Freebird partners take to your change?

A: Well, I didn't call them up on the phone and say, "Guess what, I've changed." I figured they would learn in due course. Anyway, there was only the big oaf [Gordy] to worry about. I think Roberts fell off the end of the earth somewhere.

Q: Terry Gordy first learned about your change when you helped Ted DiBiase and Steve O in a tag team match against Gordy and his new partner, Jimmy Snuka, right?

A: That's right. It was my first night back in Georgia, and I knew it would be tough to prove I've really changed. So I'm in the dressing room, looking out through the curtain watching Gordy



Tony Atlas yanks on Hayes' long blond hair and fires a right at his head. The sight of his younger brother acting like the vile Freebirds was too much for Hayes. He has vowed a new lifestyle.

and Snuka wrestle. You know, watching those slime was like suddenly being able to see after being blind all your life. The tactics they used, man, it was despicable. Q: Isn't it true that some of the tactics they were using were illegal moves you taught Gordy during your Freebird days.

A: Uh, well, you know...yeah, I guess so. But like I say, I was seeing things differently. I don't know, maybe when I was doing them, I could rationalize them. But seeing it from a different perspective, I just knew it was wrong.

Q: So you helped DiBiase and O?

A: Well, in a way I guess so. You see, the referee was knocked cold and Ted and Steve had Gordy and Snuka defeated. But there was no ref to make it official. So I ran into the ring, counted

Gordy's shoulders out, and gave the Georgia tag team belts to Teddy and Steve.

Q: The commission reversed the ruling of course, claiming you couldn't award anything to DiBiase and O because you don't have a referee's license.

A: Yeah, but it's the thought that counts, isn't it?

Q: So where does Michael Hayes go from here? All of Georgia's rulebreakers have made you their number-one target, and quite frankly, the scientific community hasn't rallied around you just yet. Perhaps they still doubt your motives.

A: I suppose they do. But they'll learn to accept me. And even if they don't, it really doesn't matter. I've made my choice based on what's inside me. I'm doing what's right, and that's all that counts anymore. □

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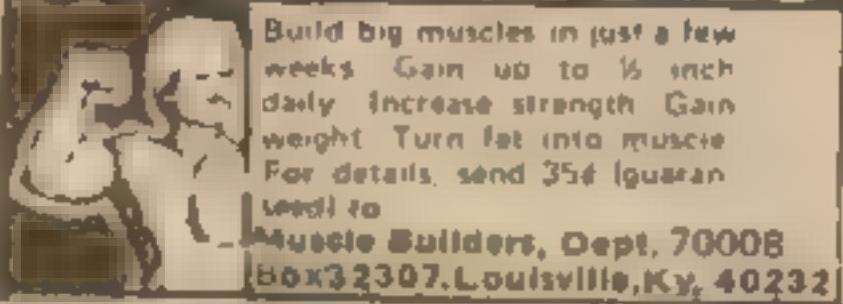
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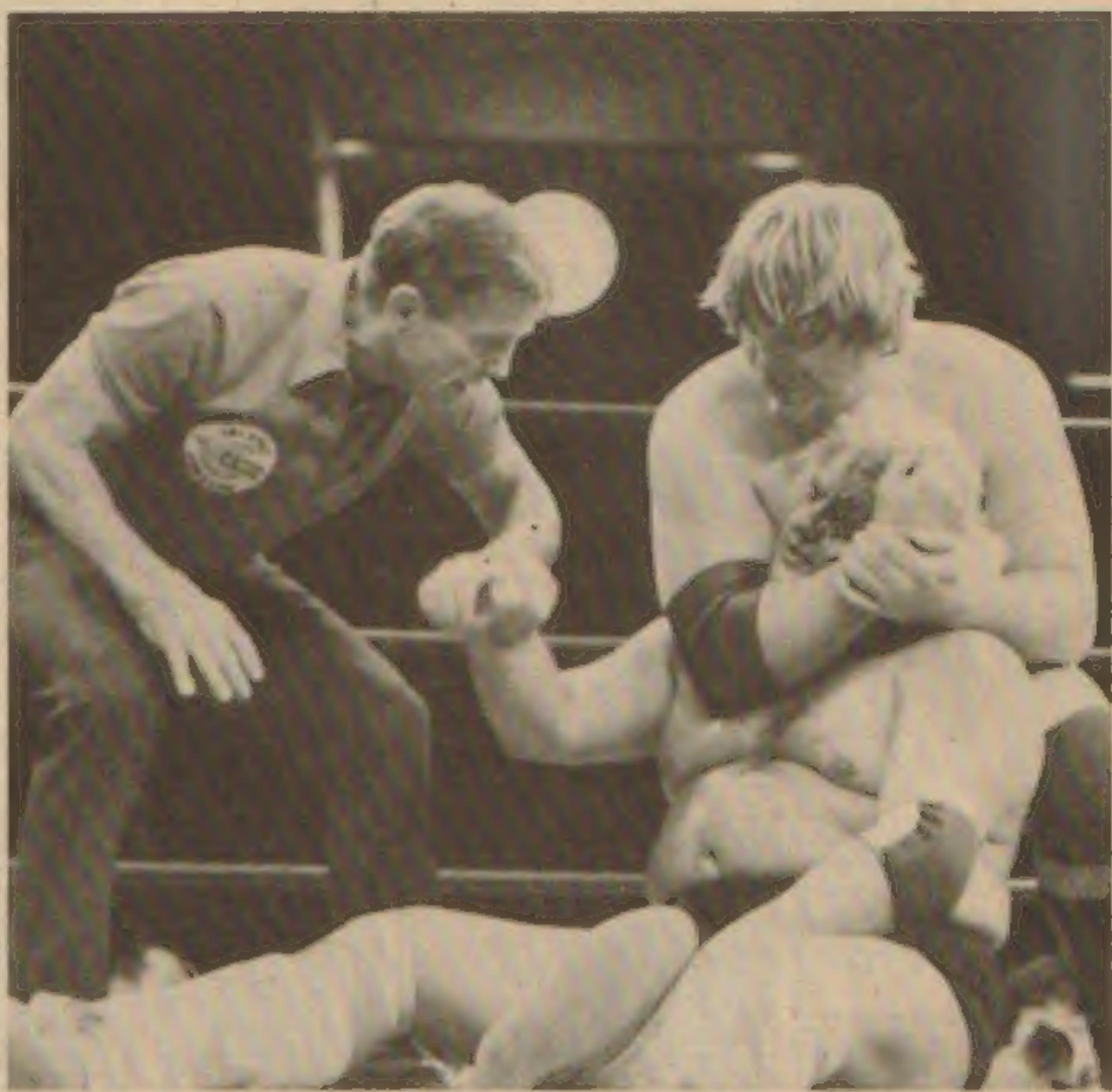
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RACE - RHODES

(Continued from Page 27)



Referee Johnny "Red Shoes" Dugan tries to determine if Rhodes is fit to continue (above). He was. Dusty went on to take the advantage (opposite right) and defend his belt in one of the toughest series of matches in recent title history.

continental travel with seven matches a week.

Normally, a wrestler might enter four or five matches in a busy week. Seven in a week places an inordinate amount of strain on both the physical and the psychological abilities of the wrestler.

Add to this strain the lack of sleep caused by jet lag from traveling between the States, Japan, Germany, and Australia, and you're talking about trying to cram nine or 10 days worth of activity into seven.

"Practically impossible," said our source from the Rhodes camp. "At times we would literally be getting on a plane immediately after the match, flying to another country, and getting back into the ring maybe an hour after landing. It was the

most absurd thing I've ever seen in my life.

"But Dusty pulled it off," he continued. "That was the most amazing feat I've ever seen any man perform, to endure that much punishment for so long. Once we finally found out what Race was up to, we were able to get an injunction against some of his commitments. After that, we were able to chop the schedule down to where it was a little more manageable."

Harley Race was unavailable for comment through press time. There was no answer to phone calls to his office, either. Dusty Rhodes, however, was able to be reached.

"I think any man who goes ahead and tries to destroy another man like that is totally disgusting," said Rhodes. "I

mean, he didn't even have the guts to meet me face to face, he had to go and do something under the table. He couldn't accept the loss in the ring, he had to go and attempt something underhanded.

"I think I proved who was the stronger man, though. I'd like to see that coward Race try and



withstand the schedule he put me through. He wouldn't last two days. I conquered Race, then I had to conquer an opponent a day right after that. I had to conquer physical exhaustion. I had to conquer mental fatigue. I had to conquer jet lag.

"Race," Rhodes continued, "that snake couldn't conquer the flu if he had to. I proved to Race in the ring who the strongest man was, and I proved it to him outside of the ring, in spite of his diabolical planning. I proved to the world what The American Dream is all about."

Dusty Rhodes had to run a gauntlet of opposition unlike any he had to face before in his life. That he did so as well as he did is a shining credit to his talent and perseverance. □

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ANDRE THE GIANT

(Continued from Page 43)



past Slaughter without any problems, without any cramps in my leg or anything, then I should be able to do well in the Garden."

The Garden was still some weeks away, but then Andre stepped into the ring at C.W. Post, it was as if he had been away for years instead of just months. The applause and cheers threatened to collapse the roof as Andre broke into a wide grin, waving to the crowd during the ring announcements.

During the first minutes of the match, Andre was clearly tentative in his attacks against Slaughter. In what otherwise might have been devastating moves, Andre simply maintained an average offense. It was obvious that his mind was more on his match months ago with Khan than on his match now with Slaughter.

Soon, though, The Giant awoke. His confidence both in himself as a wrestler and in his body as a weapon quickly returned. He began to take the offensive against Slaughter, looking more and more like the Andre everyone had come to expect.

Andre assumes the advantage with a standing figure-four armbar (above). Andre nearly slips into unconsciousness as Slaughter applies a nervehold (below).



"It was terrific!" raved Ed Schultz, a Long Island wrestling fan who had witnessed the match. "I'm a great fan of Andre, and I was worried about whether he would be able to come back as strong as before. Well, if you ask me, he's even stronger than he used to be! Yessir, Andre the Giant is back for good!"



Andre's excellent showing against Slaughter proved to observers—and more importantly, himself—that he is ready for a match with Killer Khan.

Andre himself was positive following the match, if not as enthusiastic as some fans about his return.

"I'm very pleased with the way I wrestled tonight," he said. "I felt strong, I felt I was able to do just about anything I wanted to do in the ring. Best of all, I wasn't as worried about my leg as I thought I might be."

"Sgt. Slaughter, though . . . he's pretty tough, but he's not Killer Khan. It's still hard for me to say whether or not I'll be able to really cut loose at the Garden. You know, for a goon like Khan, you've got to give 110 percent of yourself every minute. You've got to be both amazingly aggressive and incredibly defensive at the same time. He's a cunning and devious opponent."

So for now, Andre's self-confidence has improved. His physical condition seems to be as good as it can be, but there is still some lingering doubt about how far he can actually push himself. No doubt he will soon be tested to his limits when he meets Khan at the Garden. Should he prevail there, the world will know for sure that Andre has returned. □

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